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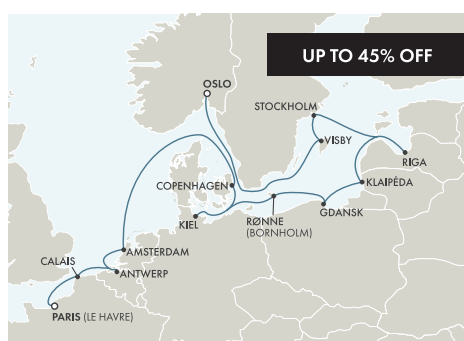
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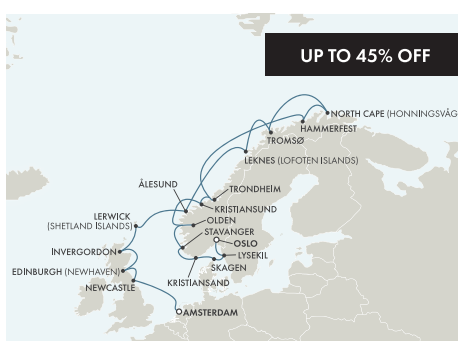
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Sale fit for a king

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises is hosting a sale offering up to 50% off 2025-2026 voyages. Itineraries on sale include the 'Romance Across Europe' and the 'Glories of Norway' - see **cover page** for more info.

RCG's new res system for Aus



ROYAL Caribbean Group's under-construction reservations system will be rolled out in Australia, Senior Vice President Sales & Trade Relations Vicki Freed has confirmed to **CW**.

The new iTravel Cruise platform - not affiliated with the travel agency network - is being built by IBS Software.

It will be rolled out globally, and will be available in a wide range of currencies and languages.

iTravel Cruise is still a number of years away from launching in the market, Freed said, but is being designed as the Amazon of booking technology.

A particular focus of the new system will be simplifying group bookings, Freed said.

"We just want to make it easy for the consumer and for the travel partner," she told this masthead last week aboard *Ovation of the Seas* (**pictured**).

"The focus is to make it the best system in the marketplace, whether it's cruise, air, vacation, we want to have the best, the easiest, the most flexible system for the trade.

"It's really important we make it easy for the trade, because the product itself can sometimes be complicated, itineraries can be complicated, and so by having a drag-and-drop res system, it's like Amazon," Freed added.

iTravel Cruise will be available to all Royal Caribbean Group cruise lines, rolling out first with Silversea, followed by the company's flagship brand, and then Celebrity Cruises. *MS*

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An ultra-luxury, all-inclusive French Polynesia voyage is currently on sale with Silversea - see **page 5** for more info.



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Melbourne feeling effect of cruise losses

CARNIVAL Corporation's decision to quit berthing its Cunard Line and Princess Cruises brands in Melbourne this year (*CW* 30 Nov 2023) is set to blow an estimated \$37.6m hole in the state's economy.

The move, first announced more than a year and a half ago, will see more than 100 ships bypass Melbourne over the next four years following the Victorian State Government's decision to hike berthing fees by 15% (*CW* 29 Nov 2023).

Levies were raised last year, from \$28.50pp for the first 24 hours to \$32.78, and from \$1.19 to \$1.37 for each hour beyond 24 hours, *The Age* has reported.

New analysis by the national Parliamentary Budget Office, and commissioned by the opposition Victorian Liberal Party, suggests the fee hike will cut the state government's tax intake from cruise ships by about \$9.8 million



between 2025 and 2028.

The news is even worse for Victoria's tourism industry at large, with *The Age* reporting \$27.8 million will be lost from the sector due to around 138,200 fewer cruise passengers.

"Melbourne's cruise economy has declined partly because the rise in port fees and charges makes the city one of the most expensive in the world for a cruise line to visit," said Carnival Country Manager Peter Little.

"Home ported ships are incredibly valuable to the

Victorian economy because many of our guests will stay in Melbourne before or after their cruise, to explore city attractions or dine in restaurants.

"We also sourced an enormous volume of food and beverages locally, when our ships were based in Melbourne."

Little said Carnival looks forward to the release of Victoria's cruise strategy, "which will hopefully provide a path to streamline regulations, ease cost burdens, and encourage more cruise lines to home port in Melbourne". *MS*

New Broome wharf

BROOME is receiving a new wharf which is being hailed as "game-changing", with the power to "transform access to the Kimberley region".

The \$200 million privately funded development, Kimberley Marine Support Base, has been designed to overcome Broome's extreme tidal challenges, enabling safe, efficient, 24/7 access for visiting cruise ships.

Cruise Lines International Association Managing Director Joel Katz said the new wharf is set to deliver enormous benefits for regional tourism.

"Now we need federal government agencies to match this ambition and provide the certainty of operation that cruise lines require," he said.

"With the right policy and regulatory settings in place, cruise lines can commit to bringing ships to this spectacular region."

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*Entries close 13 June 2025.



APT, Seabourn, celebrate launch of partnership

APT and Seabourn Cruise Line have set sail on their first Kimberley voyage as part of a collaboration that will continue to 2028 (**CW** 22 Feb 2024).

The 10-day Kimberley Coastal Expedition, which ran from 21-31 May, marked the inaugural sailing under the partnership, which will also include Mediterranean luxury cruising.

The sold-out voyage aboard *Seabourn Pursuit* carried 264 APT guests through one of Australia's most remote and spectacular regions, with highlights including King George Falls, Montgomery Reef, and Horizontal Falls.

More expeditions under the APT-Seabourn banner are already on the horizon, which in addition to *Pursuit*, will include her sister ship *Seabourn Venture*.

Future journeys will span Iceland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Greenland, the



Mediterranean, and Antarctica.

"This inaugural voyage is the perfect example of what we set out to achieve when we partnered with Seabourn - extraordinary destinations experienced in a way that feels seamless, enriching and special," APT Travel Group Chief Executive

Officer David Cox said.

"Seeing the first images and hearing the stories from our guests and team on board has been incredibly rewarding.

"It confirms that this collaboration has real power to redefine what luxury expedition cruising can be." *MS*

Fain to step down

ROYAL Caribbean Group has announced Chair Richard Fain will step down from his role in the last quarter of the year, when he will be replaced by Chief Executive Jason Liberty.

Fain has been Chair since 1988, and also served as the company's Chief Executive until Liberty took over three-and-a-half years ago (**CW** 10 Nov 2021).

He will remain a Director, while John Brock, who has been on the board since 2014, has assumed the role of Independent Lead Director.

Royal Caribbean described Fain in a press release as "a visionary leader whose contributions helped shape the modern cruise industry".

"Richard's leadership has been nothing short of transformative," Liberty said in a statement.

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HAVE you ever felt like a late-night snack, a special dessert, or an off-piste dish while on board a ship?

Disney Cruise Line has you covered, with a recent report in *BestLife* detailing the brand's secret onboard menu.

A Reddit poster explained the secret dishes comprise "mostly Indian food that is quite good", such as daal, paneer, chicken tikka masala, butter chicken, and other assorted curries.

Those who are hoping to order off the secret menu simply need to tell their server in advance, another social media user claimed.

Cruisers can also enjoy a late-night treat with a secret snack bar, consisting of finger foods, crostinis, fresh vegetables, samosas, pork potstickers, breakfast sausages, and jalapeno poppers.

That's not all - there's also a number of free room service options Disney passengers can order, including a Mickey Mouse ice cream bar, a cake, and freshly baked chocolate chip cookies.



Agents join Heritage famil



ELEVEN Australian agents have been invited on a VIP Japan famil with Heritage Expeditions.

The 11-day cruise sailed from Osaka to Tokyo, with advisors on board from Virtuoso, The Luxury Travel Collection, and other top-selling distribution partners.

The voyage, hosted by Australian Sales Manager Chris Le Roux, is exploring three of Japan's islands including main island Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku, and even South Korea.

Heritage Adventurer has been exploring some of Japan's iconic highlights alongside lesser-known and rarely-visited coastlines.

Highlights include Japan's famous art island Naoshima, Hiroshima, Miyajima's famed Itsukushima Shrine, ancient castles, world-famous gardens, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and more.

Commercial Director & Expedition Leader Aaron Russ said the VIP famil is a fantastic way of sharing Heritage's all-inclusive, authentic expeditions, and exploring Japan, one of Australia's hottest travel destinations this year. *MS*

Pictured are Darcy Grealy, Travel

Associates Belconnen; Adam Townson, Travel Associates; Santo Montalto, Emma Whiting Travel; Brigid Avery, Luxury Travel Collection; Leah Morton, Travel Associates Mountain Creek; Yvette Scalas, ATP Travel Terrigal; Danielle Jackson, Chirn Park Travel Associates; Le Roux; Kirsten Fransen, Travel Associates Turrumurra; Holly Chapman, Destination HQ; Trish Greene, Suncity Travel; and Elizabeth Clarke, The Cruise Centre.

AIDA powers up

AIDA Cruises' *AIDAnova* has become the first cruise ship to connect to Copenhagen's shore power grid.

The inauguration of the new plant at the city's cruise terminal was attended by King Frederik X of Denmark, and marks the 14th port where AIDA ships use shore power.

The cruise line is planning more than 70 calls to Copenhagen this year, making it one of the most important ports in Northern Europe for the German brand.

Celestyal hails Aus

CELESTYAL Cruises CCO Lee Haslett has hailed Australia's growing appetite for fly-cruise as key to his line's most successful season yet.

Cruise Lines International Association's recent *Source Market Report* found fly-cruise now represents 18.5% of Australian cruise passengers, up 3.3 percentage points.

The Mediterranean (6.2%) also remains Australia's most popular long-haul cruise destination, with Celestyal capitalising heavily on both of these trends, Haslett said.

Australia was key to Celestyal's success last year, with bookings up 37% from the market, in what was the cruise line's banner year (**CW** 27 Feb).

"As Australia continues to embrace cruise as a mainstream holiday choice, the opportunity is there for the taking and Australia firmly remains in our sights as a key growth market," Haslett said.

"We're proud to have played a part in fuelling this demand.

"Our refreshed fleet, with the arrival of *Celestyal Journey* and *Celestyal Discovery*, has allowed us to offer more of what Aussie travellers are looking for: personalised service aboard mid-sized ships, access to off-the-beaten-track ports, and a careful balance of premium comfort and out-of-this-world value."

Celestyal is currently offering savings of up to 60% across 87 sailings between Jun 2025 and Mar 2027.

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