

Cruise Weekly today

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

Vale APT founder

APT Travel Group has announced the loss of its founder Geoff McGeary (pictured), who passed away on Wed.

The travel luminary died peacefully at his home, one week shy of his 84th birthday.

McGeary built his family's Melbourne bus business into one of the world's most well-known and respected travel and cruise companies, operating a fleet of river ships in Europe, launched in 2005 alongside AmaWaterways.

The partnership lasted 20 years, before APT started building its own ships last year (**CW** 30 Apr).

McGeary is survived by his children Rob McGeary and Lou Tandy, who continue to run the company today.

"Geoff was a true pioneer of the Australian travel industry, and his contributions have been nothing short of extraordinary," APT said.

"His passion for creating unforgettable travel experiences was matched by a deep commitment to innovation, integrity, and care for people."

Major figures from around the cruise sector, such as Craig Burgess, Jeff Gillies, and Damian Borg, all paid tribute to McGeary.

Memorial details will be shared in due course, with donations to APT's foundation, OneTomorrow requested in lieu of flowers - **CLICK HERE**.



Orient Express yacht floats



ORIENT Express Sailing Yachts has celebrated a key construction milestone of its maiden vessel, the largest sailing yacht in the world, *Orient Express Corinthian* (**CW** 13 Mar).

The newbuild (pictured) floated out from the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in France this week, marking her official debut on the water.

The event followed four-and-a-half months of assembly, with the yacht then relocating from the construction dock to the outfitting yard.

Following the successful float-out, the vessel is now moored at the quay to begin her final outfitting and finishing phases ahead of her maiden voyage in Jun 2026.

Orient Express Corinthian is poised to "redefine standards in luxury cruising", according to the cruise line.

Measuring 220m in length and featuring three masts, the yacht comprises of 54 suites ranging from 45m² to 230m², each one framed by expansive picture windows or terraces.

The vessel will also offer next-level sustainability as the first sailing yacht equipped with the SolidSail propulsion system, complemented by a hybrid system powered by liquefied natural gas.

Orient Express said the newbuild aims to achieve near-zero-emission cruising.

The vessel also features an AI-driven floating object detection system, designed to minimise the risk of marine mammal collisions, while dynamic positioning technology eliminates the need for anchoring, helping to preserve delicate seabeds.

"Every aspect of the yacht's design is calibrated to protect the ocean it traverses," the line said.

Guests can dine at five restaurants on board, under the direction of multi-Michelin-starred chef Yannick Alleno, who is also the executive chef of the Orient Express train.

Designed by the Artistic Director of Orient Express, architect Maxime d'Angeac, the interior of the ship "reinterprets the golden age of rail travel with a contemporary and elevated sensibility, echoing the grandeur of legendary ocean liners".

Corinthian will first cruise in the Mediterranean and Adriatic from Jun-Oct 2026, offering 27 itineraries ranging from three to 14 days.

She will then embark on a transatlantic to the Caribbean, where she will be joined by her sister ship, *Orient Express Olympian*, in the summer of 2027 - bookings now open **HERE**. JM

Mitsui into Aus

JAPAN-BASED Mitsui Ocean Cruises is the latest line to be represented by small ship specialist Cruise Traveller.

The cruise line has been expanding quickly in the past 12 months, earlier this year increasing its US presence by linking with Virtuoso-aligned agencies (**CW** 26 Feb).

Mitsui has also been bolstering its fleet, launching its latest vessel, *Mitsui Ocean Fuji*, in Dec, formerly Seabourn Cruise Line's *Seabourn Odyssey* (**CW** 12 Dec).

Mitsui also plans to add *Seabourn Sojourn* next year, at the completion of her duties with the Carnival-owned luxury line (**CW** 06 Mar).

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AmaMagdalena sets sail in Colombia

AMAWATERWAYS has christened and set sail on the Magdalena River in Colombia, becoming the first cruise line to do so, with a ceremony to mark the occasion taking place this week in Santa Cruz de Mompox.

The event attracted local leaders including the Governor of the Bolivar Department, as well as national officials from the Ministries of Tourism, Transport, & Defence and local business leaders, reflecting the partnerships the line has built in the country.

Colombian entrepreneur and interior designer Marianna Schlegel Donado served as godmother of *AmaMagdalena*, cutting the ceremonial ribbon to break the traditional bottle of champagne across the bow.

Donado also played a role in the design of the ship's staterooms, with interiors paying tribute to



Colombian design.

Created in collaboration with local artisans, *AmaMagdalena* (pictured) caters to 60 passengers, with onboard facilities including two restaurants, one serving Latin American cuisine, while the Bolivar specialty restaurant offers an a la carte setting.

The ship will offer two seven-night itineraries sailing between Cartagena and Barranquilla.

Guests will be able to enjoy

a private celebration of the Barranquilla Carnival, of which Donado is a former queen, along with a jazz performance in Mompox and a visit to Palenque.

Off-ship activities will also see guests able to view local wildlife, including an array of colourful and interesting birdlife.

Optional pre- and post-cruise extensions to Medellin, Cartagena, and Panama City can also be added to itineraries.

Guests can make use of a sun deck with swimming pool and well-equipped fitness centre.

"Today's christening ceremony in Mompox marks a powerful moment not just for *AmaWaterways*, but for the future of river cruising," co-founder & Chief Executive Officer Rudi Schreiner said.

AmaWaterways will add a second ship - *AmaMelodia* - to the Magdalena later this year. *ML*

Hapag-Lloyd spring

HAPAG-LLOYD Cruises has announced a series of cruises on board its five-star ship, *Europa 2*, and its luxury expedition ship, *Hanseatic inspiration*, for 2025-26.

Travellers can spend the pre-Christmas season in New York, Boston, and Baltimore on *Europa 2*'s 'Advent on the East Coast' cruise from 10-20 Dec for example, or explore both sides of the Arctic Circle on an 18-day voyage on board *Hanseatic inspiration*, which sails on 08 Sep from Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.

Other highlights include the 18-day 'Great Lakes & Fall Foliage', which sails from Milwaukee to Halifax in Oct.

Cruisers can secure a discount on select voyages with Hapag-Lloyd's spring booking specials, which end 31 Jul.

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CARNIVAL Cruise Line's brand ambassador John Heald must surely be forced to bite his tongue when responding to some queries in his social Q&A forum, especially when one accuses the line of being "musically discriminating".

To be fair, country music can be a pretty polarising subject - most either love it or hate it.

In his prolific forum, Heald was recently pigeonholed by one cruiser upset by the lack of a country music party onboard ships sailing from Galveston.

"If you want to make Texans feel welcome, then you should do this and soon," the poster said in response to Heald's poll about themed parties onboard.

In response, Heald was his typical diplomatic self, saying the line doesn't "discriminate" but tries to include everybody.

"For example, when the *Carnival Pride* was in Greenland a few weeks ago we threw a housewarming party for a family of Inuits."

Back to the polarising country music though, Heald's post attracted a variety of responses, including one passenger who is clearly in the 'hate it' camp.

"I would probably want to perform a cranial amputation on myself with my sail and sign card if I had to endure a country music party," the passenger wrote.

Ritz's housewarming party



ribbon on the new headquarters - [CLICK HERE](#) to view. *MS*

Inset: Seward and Kotanidis with CruiseHQ General Manager Caroline Hitchen.

YESTERDAY was arguably the biggest day in The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's history in Australia, with the newly assembled local team meeting for the first time (*CW* 13 Jun).

Cruise Weekly last week revealed the addition of Ritz-Carlton's first two reservation agents, Byron Fenwick and Tyler Parker, who yesterday joined Director of Travel Partnerships Anastasia Kotanidis and Vice President & General Manager Seb Seward (**pictured**) for the first in-person local meeting of the new outfit.

The team then hosted a small number of trade partners at the end of the day for an office-warming, at which Seward cut the

Disney deposit drop

DISNEY Cruise Line has announced the reduction of its required booking deposit from 20% to 10%.

For existing reservations made on or before 17 Jun, the original 20% deposit remains in place in accordance with the terms agreed upon at the time of booking.

Cancellation fees will follow the new deposit policy for Disney sailings made on or after 18 Jun 2025.

The line said the change was made to help lower the upfront cost of booking a cruise vacation.

If guests cancel their reservation during the deposit cancellation fee period and the deposit was 10%, the cancellation fees will also be 10% of the voyage fare.



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