



# CRUISE

## WEEKLY

*delivered daily!*



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Wednesday 26th Mar 2025

### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of all the cruise news plus a full page from **National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions**.

### Sail with Nat Geo

**SET** sail with 20% savings on select voyages this year with National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions when booking by 15 Apr.

The cruise line sails 21 small ships designed to reflect the uniqueness of their journeys.

Each vessel features well-appointed staterooms, a range of amenities, and numerous social spaces.

The fleet is also equipped with expedition tools such as snowshoes and snorkels.

Head to **page 4** for more information on the offer and the cruise line.

## Riviera preparing for Aussie debut

**OCEANIA Cruises' Riviera (pictured)** is set to make her Aussie debut later this year (**CW** 17 Oct), offering itineraries with a gourmet foodie focus, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the local culinary scene.

*Riviera's* debut in Australia, which will see her replace *Regatta* in the region, will be highlighted by an array of small-group shore excursions, including visits to local markets, rice fields, and truffle farms, with a particular focus on the destination's seafood.

The season will run from Nov 2025 to Mar 2026, featuring a diverse selection of itineraries ranging from 14 to 35 days, with departures from multiple ports across APAC.

Voyages combine hidden gems from around the region, such as Kangaroo Island in South Australia, Mystery Island in



Vanuatu, and Dunedin in New Zealand, with iconic destinations such as Sydney.

The Oceania culinary team will also introduce a new cooking class for the season, the 'Down Under Abundance', designed to showcase local foodie highlights.

Guests will also have the option to add a pre- or post-cruise land program, including a journey to the Blue Mountains, which will see guests join a hike with a national park ranger, who will share Dreamtime stories of the

Aboriginal people

"We are incredibly excited to bring *Riviera* to Australia and New Zealand for the first time," Oceania Chief Luxury Officer Jason Montague said.

"This new chapter reflects our commitment to offering exceptional, immersive experiences that celebrate the region's diverse cultures and breathtaking landscapes.

"*Riviera's* voyages will offer travellers an unmatched opportunity to savour the finest local cuisine while exploring some of the world's most iconic destinations in unparalleled comfort and style."

The 1,250-passenger *Riviera* is currently based in Asia, and will also sail in Alaska this year, before heading to Australia, as *Regatta* embarks on her 'Explorations by Norwegian' charter with My Cruises (**CW** 14 Mar). *MS*



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## Aldi cruise bargain

**SAVINGS** of up to 52% on a variety of global cruises have been launched by Aldi Holidays including a seven-day Mexican Riviera voyage departing from Los Angeles.

Available from 01 Apr, the package includes return economy flights, two nights pre-cruise, onboard wi-fi and a US\$150 shore excursion credit, priced from \$3,999pp.

The supermarket giant is also offering 50% off a nine-day Japan 'Autumn Shores' cruise consisting of a nine-night sailing on *Diamond Princess*, priced from \$3,999pp.

## New star in the Med

**STAR** Clippers will visit seven ports for the first time in its newly launched 2026 Mediterranean schedule.

New destinations include the Greek port of Ouranopolis, while Barletta, Monopoli, Crotone, and Pesaro in Italy have also been added.

Pesaro will be accessible via tenders and will allow guests to enjoy a shore excursion opportunity to visit the small republic of San Marino.

The line's 166-passenger ship *Star Flyer* will be the only one of Star Clippers' three tall ships to visit Ouranopolis and Pesaro in the 2026 summer.

Also new for the line are the ports of Sibenik, Croatia; Gythio, Greece; and Crotone, Italy; while Ouranopolis will feature as part of a seven-night Green Islands itinerary sailing in Jun 2026.

"Travellers are eager to discover new destinations, particularly ports not accessible by larger ships, and we are delighted to offer seven new ports of call within our Mediterranean 2026 programme," Star Clippers National Account Manager Roger Condon said.

## New look for Sea Zero

**HURTIGRUTEN** has unveiled a redesigned version of its Sea Zero energy-efficient expedition ship, which will set sail along the Norwegian coast from 2030.

After refining, modelling, and testing, the new-look ship (pictured) is now longer, lower, and more stable, with two retractable sails instead of the original three, as shown on renders when the project was first unveiled almost two years ago (*CW* 08 Jun 2023).

Each sail is able to be raised or lowered depending on need.

The ship also boasts large battery packs, air lubrication systems to reduce drag, contra-rotating propellers, smart energy for heating and cooling, and an aerodynamically optimised hull.

Designers have recently completed a new round of testing at the Sintef Ocean basin and rowing tank in Trondheim, using an eight-metre model of the hull.

These tests confirmed the sails alone will be able to reduce energy consumption by up to 15%.

Overall, the concept aims to cut energy use by up to 50% compared to the ships Hurtigruten uses today.

This energy reduction will allow the new coastal expedition model to draw on battery power generated using shore connectivity, which will make emission-free running possible.

"The Coastal Express has sailed the Norwegian coast for 130 years...for us to sail for 130 years more, we need to change the way we sail," Hurtigruten Chief Executiv Officer Hedda Felin said.

"We are learning a lot from these tests, and we now see that many of the ambitious goals in this project can also be implemented in practice," added Hurtigruten Chief Operating Officer Gerry Larsson-Fedde.



"For each round, we make changes to optimise the design - now the ship is eight metres longer and slightly wider, and the height has been reduced by one deck," he added.

Project Manager Trond Johnsen said designers are developing a battery system with enough energy to allow the ship to sail between charging ports under normal weather conditions.

Once operational, the as-yet-unnamed Sea Zero ship will be deployed onto Hurtigruten's flagship 12-day itinerary between Bergen and Kirkenes, visiting a selection of 34 ports along the way - a milk-run style itinerary which couples tourism with cargo delivery to coast communities. *ML*

## Michelin's goodbye

**MSC** Cruises Head of Operations Arnaud Michelin, will sign off from the cruise line for the last time on 04 Apr.

Michelin's duties will be assumed by Vanesa Albertini from 07 Apr, with no other changes to booking contact details for agents.

## Cruise's polar power

**TWO** expedition ships, including Hapag Lloyd Cruises' *Hanseatic Nature* and Silversea's *Silver Endeavour*, are set to visit the subarctic Canadian port of Churchill this year, aligned with the beluga whale-viewing season.

*Nature* will dock in Churchill for five nights, from 09-13 Aug, during back-to-back sailings to Greenland, while *Endeavour* also has two back-to-back cruises from Reykjavik and to Nuuk, with embarkation and disembarkation on 25 Jul.

In addition to whale viewing, safaris are also popular in Churchill, known as the 'Polar Bear Capital of the World'.

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**CRYSTAL**



**WE'RE** in the midst of a "golden age for shipwreck discoveries", according to *The New York Times* - but just who gets to enjoy the spoils of their find is a tricky conundrum.

Technology has made the practice of finding a shipwreck easier and less expensive, opening up the hunt to both amateurs and professionals.

Climate change has also intensified storms and beach erosion, exposing shipwrecks in shallow water.

Hunters are also looking for wrecks for their sunken treasure and their historical value, which begs the question: if you make a valuable find, is it yours?

Unfortunately not in Australia; our country has a blanket protection on the roughly 8,000 historic wrecks littering our seabed, meaning you'll have to head abroad to do your salvaging.

## RSSC lucrative for agents

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) will be offering a lot for the trade to capitalise on, Senior VP International & Consumer Sales Steve Odell has told **CW**, as the line prepares to turn its focus to its 2026-2028 program.

Odell said RSSC expects to close out its sales for this year in the next couple of months, with Australia leading the charge internationally for the cruise line as its third-largest market.

"Despite all the hurdles and barriers, the geopolitical issues, the dollar, we remain strong here," he said.

"Lisa has been selling well into '26, '27, we've got a long booking curve here, we've got the highest international daily rates, so it's been a good start to the year."

The cruise line will also be opening up sales on its 2028 World Cruise in the coming months, as well as its new ship *Seven Seas Prestige* (**CW** 22 Oct), allowing savvy travel advisors to bank cash further out.

"Once you get out of wave, you've got to get a bit more creative on what's left for the year, so we're running up

promotion for 2025 on the remaining voyages."

"There's a big opportunity out there at the moment...not all agents grasp this concept of getting the further-out business, but the smart ones who do really build such a solid base ahead of time," Odell explained.

"It gets hard when you're into the year, because then the price gets a little bit softer, and the return isn't so great, but we can't afford to sell an empty bed."

Odell said the Mediterranean remains the most sought-after destination for Australians; however, colder destinations are proving popular too.

"We've done quite well in Northern Europe as well with these Iceland, Greenland, Norwegian fjords.

"We could put more capacity in Japan, the Aussies can't get enough of it."

RSSC's itineraries in South America - particularly with Antarctic visits - are also turning Australians' heads, while close-to-home is proving popular with brand loyalists who may wish to avoid a long-haul flight. *MS*

## Say 'oui' to France

**AVALON** Waterways has set sail in Bordeaux for the first time aboard *Avalon Artistry II* (**CW** 09 Feb 2024).

The cruise line's new 'Bonjour Bordeaux: Chateaux, Wineries & Charming Villages' itinerary recently departed for the first time on a special, invite-only, VIP sailing.

The new itinerary explores the Garonne and Dordogne shores, including chateau visits, Sauternes tastings, e-biking, and more.

"The wait is over and the wine is flowing - we are thrilled to officially embark on this new journey through Bordeaux," President Pam Hoffee said.

"With our first guests embarking on their holiday, we're not just introducing a new itinerary, we're elevating the experience of Bordeaux itself, offering immersive moments that blend history, culture, cuisine and discovery in every sip and step."

The new itinerary can also be combined with Avalon's other France cruises.



# DISCOVER



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