



Cruise Weekly today

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

A new Prestige

CONSTRUCTION of Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) *Seven Seas Prestige* (CW 22 Oct), commenced recently, with a celebration at the Fincantieri shipyard in Italy.

Prestige will be the first ship in a new class for the cruise line, its first new class of ship in 10 years.

Three ceremonial coins were welded onto the keel of the ship, as part of a long-standing maritime tradition.

"*Seven Seas Prestige* represents our continued legacy of elevating the standard of ultra-luxury travel," Chief Luxury Officer Jason Montague said.

MSC's triple World-class celebration

MSC Cruises took delivery of *MSC World America* overnight, among a number of World-class ship milestones with shipyard Chantiers de l'Atlantique.

The company also celebrated the coin ceremony for *MSC World Asia*, and the steel-cutting for the newly-named fourth World-class ship, *MSC World Atlantic*.

World America is the 23rd vessel in the fleet, and is set to be officially named on 09 Apr at the cruise line's new state-of-the-art MSC Miami Cruise Terminal - the largest in the world.

The ship offers new venues and concepts tailored specifically to the American market, combining European style with US comfort.

Also celebrated was *World Asia's* coin ceremony, during which commemorative coins were placed inside the ship as a sign of blessing during construction, and to bring good



fortune to the vessel.

Two godmothers, Vice President Shore Excursions Marialuisa Iaccarino, and Flavie Biondo from Chantiers de l'Atlantique, placed the coins in the ship's hull.

World Asia will enter service during the northern winter season in 2026-27, with Mediterranean cruises in France, Italy, Spain, and Malta.

MSC's third celebration was a steel-cutting ceremony to start construction of the cruise line's fourth World-class ship, due to

enter service in 2027.

The vessel's name was revealed to be *MSC World Atlantic*, with the ship to offer cruises from Port Canaveral, sailing to the Caribbean from the winter 2027-28 season. *MS*

Pictured are MSC President & Managing Director Cruise Management Emilio La Scala and Executive Chair Pierfrancesco Vago with Chantier de l'Atlantique MSC Program Director Henri Doyer and General Manager Laurent Castaing.



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Virgin's records

VIRGIN Voyages has shattered its records with the best wave season in the cruise line's history.

The company is celebrating an almost 50% growth in revenue off the back of 34% more bookings.

Virgin has also reported a more than 50% increase in bookings for its new, longer itineraries of eight to 14 nights, indicating strong consumer interest in new ports and longer stays.

Chief Executive Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu said Virgin's passengers love the blend of intimate and elevated experiences and variety, offered by the fleet's size.

"These outstanding results show the incredible momentum our brand has built - driven by our travel advisors - who recognise that our kid-free, award-winning experience offers a true premium alternative in the industry," he said.

"Our record repeat rates are loved by [travel advisors] because another booking is almost guaranteed after their client's first sailing.

"We've created this together, and we remain completely committed to making sure our partners are always appreciated, supported, and rewarded for their trust in us and the journey ahead...the entire Virgin Voyages team couldn't be more grateful."

Saverimuttu is predicting this year will be better still.

"We're not just changing how people see and experience cruising - we're redefining what a vacation at sea can be.

"We're doing it with our signature mix of style, substance, and innovation that only Virgin can deliver, including exciting new itineraries, new entertainment, [and] new food."

Odell lunches with LTC

THE Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) hosted an exclusive Leaders Who Lunch event on Tue at Chiswick Woollahra, with Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) Senior Vice President and Chief Sales Officer Steve Odell.

The lunch brought together a select group of industry leaders for an insightful discussion with one of luxury cruising's most esteemed executives.

Odell captivated guests with a deep dive into his career trajectory, one that has seen him recognised as a leader in change and champion of diverse workforces.

LTC members were offered an exclusive journey into RSSC's forthcoming launches, an insider's perspective of recent ship renovations, and the narrative behind the cruise line's brand refresh - culminating in exciting announcements set to impact luxury cruising globally as well as closer to home in the Asia-Pacific market.

Odell believes the luxury cruise sector is at a crossroads.

"Today's affluent travellers are seeking journeys that spark emotion - where every moment is meticulously crafted, and every destination is experienced with authenticity and depth," he said.

LTC General Manager Nikki Glading described Odell as a luxury cruise "visionary", whose remarkable career has shaped the global expansion of the sector.

"To have our LTC members hear his profound insights into the shifting preferences of high-



net-worth travellers first-hand, and how RSSC's unwavering commitment to crafting deeply immersive experiences will benefit the end client underscores why it's so important for both sides of the industry to come together, so we can all excel in luxury travel," she said.

Pictured are Glading; Odell; and Vice President Sales & General

HAL's new drops

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has unveiled a major expansion of its single-barrel whiskey program for this year.

The cruise line is rolling out a curated collection of nine unique single-barrels, sourced from top distilleries across the United States.

HAL's whiskey program previously featured just one sole bourbon from Buffalo Trace Distillery.

The nine whiskeys, available in Holland America's Ocean Bar, will feature three selections from Angel's Envy, two from Weller, and one each from Uncle Nearest 1884 Single Barrel, Woodford Reserve, WhistlePig 15-Year Rye, and Westland American Single Malt.

The whiskeys will be available starting this northern spring, and will be fully rolled out across the fleet by May 2025.

"Get ready for an exclusive whiskey experience crafted specifically for enthusiasts the next time you sail with us," Senior Manager Beverage & Dining Operations Innovation Drew Foulk said.

"With this collection of rare and unique spirits, we're not only providing access to sought-after single barrel bourbons but also creating an experience that can't easily be replicated anywhere else."





MY CRUISES set shockwaves through Gold Coast Suns fans earlier this month, when the two organisations announced their partnership (*CW* 17 Mar).

The OTA recently signed up as the Suns' 'Coaches Partner' for the season, and announced the pact in a way which certainly turned their fans' heads.

"[Head Coach Damian Hardwick] to depart in 2025" was the messaging across the Suns' website and social media accounts, with many fans fearing their leader, who was preparing to start his second season in charge of the team, was on his way out.

Fortunately, there is only one kind of departure Hardwick will be making in 2025, and that is on a Royal Caribbean cruise, with the coach pictured in front of *Quantum of the Seas*.

The cheeky reveal saved the team's fans from a heart attack, or perhaps a "sun-stroke".



A new Heritage

HERITAGE Expeditions has released a new Cherry Blossoms of Japan Cruise in response to guest interest.

TM's new cruise tool



TRAVELMANAGERS (TM) has introduced a powerful new customer-facing cruise tool to enhance the experience for its members' clients.

The new platform provides real-time inventory and information from more than 30 different ocean cruise lines, with river to be added soon.

The tool is designed to complement the in-house cruise wholesaler Fastbook, which launched in Sep, as revealed by this masthead (*CW* 13 Sep).

"Fastbook provides our PTMs with a wholesale platform that offers live, 24/7 availability and integrates with our back-office system," Cruise Product Manager Lia Malone explained.

"Now each PTM can also customise their website to extend that seamless online experience to their clients."

PTM Ange Bowerman, based in Dromedary, Tas, said the new tool

makes her website more valuable to herself and her clients.

"The new platform means [my clients] can now access a wealth of information through my own website," Bowerman said.

"I can also send recommendations via the platform so my clients can study the options I've selected for them in more detail.

"This demonstrates duality in the customer experience: the ability to be part of the planning, with the security of the PTM taking care of everything."

TravelManagers' cruise sales grew 30% last year, she revealed in Jan (*CW* 31 Jan).

The growth was particularly fuelled by international cruise - a lucrative prospect for the agency network's members. *MS*

Pictured is Malone with General Manager Cruise Jeff Leckey and Cruise Operations Executive Leanne Freeman.

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Carnival Adventure</i>	28 Mar
<i>Carnival Adventure</i>	29 Mar
<i>Royal Princess</i>	29 Mar
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	29 Mar
<i>Westerdam</i>	30 Mar
<i>Nautica</i>	30 Mar
<i>Royal Princess</i>	01 Apr
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	02 Apr
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	03 Apr
MELBOURNE	
<i>Westerdam</i>	28 Mar
<i>Artania</i>	28 Mar
BRISBANE	
<i>Quantam of the Seas</i>	28 Mar
<i>Carnival Encounter</i>	29 Mar
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	30 Mar
<i>Carnival Encounter</i>	01 Apr
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	03 Apr
PERTH	
<i>Crown Princess</i>	30 Mar
ADELAIDE	
<i>Artania</i>	30 Mar
<i>Artania</i>	31 Mar
DARWIN	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	02 Apr
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	02 Apr
NEWCASTLE	
<i>Seven Seas Mariner</i>	30 Mar
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	31 Mar
TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Seven Seas Mariner</i>	01 Apr
<i>Nautica</i>	02 Apr
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	03 Apr
BUSSELTON	
<i>Crown Princess</i>	29 Mar
BROOME	
<i>Crown Princess</i>	03 Apr
AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	29 Mar
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	01 Apr