

Cruise Weekly today

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

New in Newcastle

NEWCASTLE is in the spotlight in a new brochure produced by Destination Sydney Surrounds North (DSSN) and the Port Authority of New South Wales, showcasing regions such as the Hunter Valley, Maitland, and beyond.

"This brochure will be an important tool to attract new cruise ships to Newcastle and encourage dispersal of passengers on shore excursion tours to the surrounding regions which offer a range of unique experiences and striking natural beauty," DSSN GM Glenn Caldwell said - **CLICK HERE** to read more.

Royal's two Quantum ships return

ROYAL Caribbean's *Anthem of the Seas* and *Quantum of the Seas* will cruise from Sydney and Brisbane respectively in 2026-2027, the line has announced.

The pair will sail a combination of three- to 11-night getaways to an array of destinations across Australia, the South Pacific, and New Zealand between Oct 2026 and Apr 2027.

The new cruises are available to book now, with passengers able to sail from Sydney on two four-night getaways to Hobart, or venture further to discover the South Pacific.

There are also all-new nine-night NZ getaways to destinations like Wellington, Napier, Dunedin, and Milford Sound.

The season will kick off with a 25-night cruise from Los Angeles to Sydney, visiting Hawai'i, French Polynesia, and Catalina Island.

Quantum will also make her



comeback to Brisbane in Oct for her fourth year as the largest ship in the region.

Sun-seekers can choose from 28 holidays ranging from three to eight nights, exploring the South Pacific across destinations such as Noumea and Vanuatu.

The season will feature two eight-night tropical getaways

over Christmas and the New Year, while cruisers can also choose from four- to seven-night Queensland coast cruises to Airlie Beach and Cairns.

The 4,200-passenger ship's 2026-27 line-up will also feature more seven-night getaways departing over the weekend.

"Australians know they can trust Royal Caribbean for getaways that combine convenience with non-stop adventure," Vice President & MD Gavin Smith said.

"This season, we're continuing to raise the bar with more short getaways, weekend departures, and more ways to maximise island time across the top destinations of the South Pacific,"

"With the variety of short and more frequent getaways in 2026 and 2027, every type of holidaymaker can make the most of their travels and without compromise," he added. *MS*



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Norwegian upgrades *Epic* and *Pride*

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has announced upgrades to *Norwegian Epic* and *Pride of America*, just in time for the summer season.

Epic will debut expanded family offerings, adults-only spaces, and more staterooms for her season of European cruises, commencing next week.

The ship's top deck will get some noticeable enhancements with more outdoor experiences, including a brand-new hot tub on deck 18, and a refreshed Kids' Aqua Park, replacing Splashgolf.

Vibe Beach Club has also been expanded (render **pictured**), replacing Posh Beach Club.

It will offer an additional hot tub as well as more lounge chairs and new private cabanas.

The dry dock also includes the addition of eight new staterooms, which will be a combination of balconies and oceanviews.



Meanwhile, *Pride of America* will receive more club balcony suites during her upcoming renovation, which will begin Sat.

A new Starbucks will be added within The Capitol Atrium on deck 5, while a fresh pickleball court has been created within the existing sports footprint.

Pride of America will also feature 12 new club balcony suites and three inside

staterooms on deck 12.

Splash Academy, Norwegian's youth club for children aged three to 12, and Entourage, the teen club, will be relocated to deck 6, which was previously held by the S/S America Library, internet cafe, and Chapel.

The library has been relocated to inside the Shuffles Card Room, to create a 'library and card room'. *MS*

Ritz-ing up Asia

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has gone live with *Luminara's* longest voyage yet, a crossing from Vancouver to Tokyo in Sep 2026.

The 18-night voyage will be followed by three round trips from the Japanese capital - a 10-day cruise following the same route as those on sale in Mar and May this year.

The four voyages are a teaser to Ritz-Carlton's full 2026 Asia season, which is set to be released next month.

"We are seeing strong demand for our initial Asian season, especially those itineraries including Japan, and are excited to release these teaser voyages ahead of our full season release next month," Vice President & General Manager Seb Seward told ***Cruise Weekly***.

CLICK HERE for more.

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Antarctic snaps

NIGERIAN photographer Lola Akinmade Akerstrom will host Aurora Expeditions' first-ever 'Antarctic Direct: Fly the Drake Fly/Fly Women's Only Expedition' itinerary.

Akerstrom (**pictured**) will join fellow special guest and former NASA astronaut Sandra Magnus aboard *Sylvia Earle* (**CW** 27 Mar) for the female-only voyage.

The Sweden-based speaker has shot in more than 80 countries, with her work gracing the *BBC*, *CNN*, *The Guardian*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Slate*, *Lonely Planet*, and more.

The cruise will depart on 23 Feb 2027, taking guests during a prime time of the season for wildlife activity.

Passengers will also fly across the Drake Passage in both directions, maximising their time in destination.

"This is more than a trip; it's a community of women coming together to explore one of the most pristine places on the planet," Akerstrom said.

"I'm honoured to host this transformational journey and help foster new stories, friendships, and memories in the awe-inspiring landscapes of Antarctica," she added.



MSC's summer party set



INTERACTIVE game shows, exciting parades and new Guinness World Record themed activities will feature as part of MSC Cruises' core entertainment line-up this northern summer.

Beginning in Jun, the schedule will see family activities available all over the ship, from the theatre to pools, water slides and more.

Having debuted on the recently launched *MSC World America*, the line will expand the Lego Family Game Show fleet-wide, allowing parents and children to compete in timed challenges to build various Lego masterpieces.

Lego will also star in a new family parade engaging with passengers on selected ships.

Also new for the season is a 'Doremix Family Disco' and two game shows setting unexpected challenges for guests, with prizes up for grabs.

Parents will not be forgotten either, with the cruise line hosting a new 'Golden Party' for adults to unwind and enjoy.

By popular demand, MSC will expand its partnership with

Guinness World Records to 16 ships this summer, with exclusive events inviting guests to set and break official world records.

Across the fleet, guests can also engage in various technology-based challenges and activities including F1 simulator racing.

"This summer, we are taking it to the next level, combining technology with engaging activities to create truly memorable experiences," Family Entertainment Development Director Matteo Mancini said.

"Guests can look forward to more interactive game shows, more sports, more parties and a fresh take on teen entertainment," he added. *ML*

New Croisi cruise

CROISIEUROPE has launched a new itinerary in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The 'Treasures of the North' river cruise runs between Amsterdam and Brussels with visits to Volendam, Zaanse Schans and The Hague.

Immersion elevated

AZAMARA will introduce immersive destination and port experiences featuring new cultural engagement opportunities and higher-tier shore excursions.

The new 'Destination Immersion Elevated' initiative includes a 'Curator's Collection' of once-in-a-lifetime experiences designed by the team behind the line's 'AzAmazing Evenings' concept.

Experiences under this flag will be led by locals, with guests being offered "unparalleled access" to the heart of each destination.

The new 'Elevated' offering includes 34 new AzAmazing Evenings, also led by local guides, which aim to provide access to "moments guests will never encounter on their own travels".

Guides will also come aboard to host a series of fireside discussions sharing local folklore and legendary stories.

Passengers will also enjoy local cuisine on board, with more than 150 new dishes introduced across its main dining rooms.

European voyages have seen chefs from Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain curate onboard menus with dishes reflecting the cultural heritage of each destination.

Azamara's speciality voyage count will also rise from six to 22, boosted by three new Solar Eclipse cruises next year.

The line's 2025/26 season also includes 25 new ports and 33 'Country Intensive' cruises.



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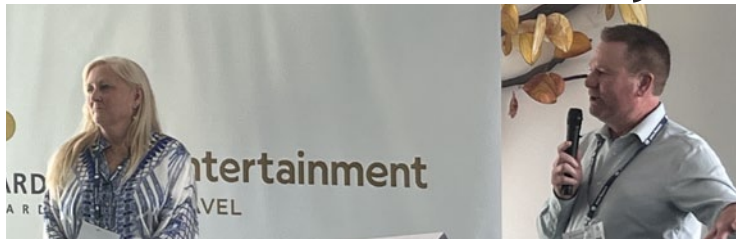


A FISHING rod lost to the ocean off the South Coast of New South Wales 40 years ago has been returned to its owner, after it was dredged up last week by a trawler.

The old fishing rod was pulled into the ocean by a game fish off the coast near Bermagui back in the 1980s, and was finally pulled up last week by the crew of *Imlay*.

The rod was clearly marked with the owner's name and 'Victorian Game Fishing Club', allowing *Imlay's* skipper to track down its owner.

Let cruise entertain you



THE Entertainment Group unveiled its travel program for next year in Sydney yesterday, including a range of members-only cruise experiences.

Partners include Princess Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours, Ponant, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, and Oceania Cruises, with the range of packages offered alongside land tours.

Sailing packages which can be accessed via the \$70 annual membership to the Entertainment Group's new travel portal include a 'Pathways to Japan' itinerary, featuring a 15-night Azamara cruise, flights, hotel stay in Tokyo, a day tour, beverage package, gratuities and an AzAmazing event from \$8,299 per person.

Booking the package via the Entertainment portal will save

travellers around \$2,400.

Also on offer is a 'Royal Baltic Shores' trip with Oceania, including flights, a 10-night voyage, hotel stays in Stockholm and Copenhagen, transfers, a beverage package, and free wi-fi.

Outside of the discount, Entertainment Group Chief Executive Officer Heidi Halson said the new travel portal also provides travellers with a stamp of quality reliability.

"What we can see from our data is that what we promote through Entertainment is rated higher than a recommendation from a friend or relative," she said.

The new travel portal has returned after a four-year hiatus and has been restored through a partnership with Ecrusing. AB

Pictured: Halson in Sydney with Ecrusing Chief Executive Officer Dean Palmer.

Princess WC 2027

PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its 2027 'World Cruise Grand Circle Pacific Voyage', which will sail from Fort Lauderdale on 06 Jan 2027.

The 129-day voyage will visit more than 60 destinations across 20 countries and three continents when it sets sail aboard *Coral Princess*.

The journey includes a transit of the Panama Canal, Hawaii, the South Pacific, Australia, Southeast Asia, Japan, Alaska, and more.

Voyage highlights will include access to destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef, Ha Long Bay, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and the Sydney Opera House.

There will also be nine late-night stays, plus an overnight in Hong Kong.

There are two departure options in addition to the full journey from Fort Lauderdale to Vancouver: a 114-day round-trip from Los Angeles to Vancouver, and a 110-day cruise from Los Angeles to Vancouver, both departing on 21 Jan 2027.

Eat & Drink Festival

ELEVEN speciality cruises in Jul will feature Virgin Voyages' Eat & Drink Festival, returning for its fourth year in 2025 on 11 Caribbean and Med sailings.

Each will feature culinary events, new menus and a bar-hopping treasure hunt.

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