

Cruise Weekly today

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

Princess 2026-27

TRAVELLERS can now book Princess Cruises' 2026-27 South America and Antarctica season, which will see *Majestic Princess* make her debut.

The Royal-class ship will operate five itineraries ranging from 15-33 days between Nov 2026-Jan 2027, featuring 17 destinations in 10 countries.

There will also be two overnight scenic experiences in the Antarctic Peninsula.

Additionally, for the first time, Princess will sail through the Beagle Channel fjords and Glacier Alley, showcasing the hanging and tidewater glaciers descending from the Cordillera Darwin mountain range.

Cheers to one year for CruiseHQ

EXCLUSIVE

CRUISEHQ is celebrating its first anniversary, marking a year defined by "exceptional performance, strategic partnerships and unwavering trade support", the company said.

The Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) wholesale cruise marketplace has achieved significant growth over its first 12 months (**CW** 17 Apr 2024), expanding its product portfolio, and building relationships with key partners across the industry.

CruiseHQ draws on extensive expertise across air, land and sea from FCTG's product portfolio, which enables it to curate a diverse portfolio of cruise holidays, combining premium product with competitive pricing and exclusive inclusions.

The wholesaler's introduction was first revealed by **Cruise Weekly** almost two years ago



(**CW** 30 Aug 2023), amid FCTG's plans to scale up its cruise business - which also included the reintroduction of the Cruiseabout brand (**CW** 24 Aug 2023).

"What we've accomplished in our first year is a reflection of the strength of our partnerships and the confidence the industry has placed in us," General Manager Caroline Hitchen told **CW**.

"We are proud to have built a platform that is trusted, effective

and constantly evolving to meet the needs of our partners

"We're excited for what lies ahead and remain committed to creating lasting value for our travel partners and suppliers, both in Australia and beyond," she added. **MS**

Pictured is the CruiseHQ team: Caitlyn Paris, Carina Mullen, Larisa Gershenfeld, Caroline Hitchen, Astrid Maier, Tina Giannopoulos, and Kim Ryan.

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Princess webinar

AGENTS can hear the latest news from Princess Cruises via Home Ex, the new virtual event for home-based advisors from *Cruise Weekly's* sister title *Travel Daily*.

In an info-packed webinar, Elly Eves, Princess' Key Account and Operations Manager, discusses the cruise line's unique offerings, how it caters to different demographics, its plans for the future, and its newest ships, *Sun Princess* and *Star Princess*.

Eves also shares the cruise line's sales tools to help agents maximise their business, from cruise sale weeks and future cruise deposits to One Source, Princess' travel advisor resource centre.

Home Ex is live until Sep and free for all attendees.

Guests can hear from brands including Norwegian Cruise Lines; AmaWaterways; Oceania Cruises; Royal Caribbean; Avalon Waterways; Viking; and more - **CLICK HERE** to check out the program.

RCI on Travel Guides

ROYAL Caribbean's (RCI) *Ovation of the Seas* will be the star of the show on this week's episode of *Travel Guides*.

The show will air at 7pm eastern on the Nine Network, profiling the Travel Guides' trip to New Zealand.

Signature charts growth

EXCLUSIVE

SIGNATURE Travel Network's cruise program in Australia has been warmly embraced by the majority of its members since launching last year (*CW* 09 Aug).

Speaking with *Cruise Weekly* recently, the network's MD for Australia and NZ, Lisa Harrison, said Signature is now working to grow the appeal of its cruise program in Australia even further.

She said Signature wants to deliver a program that Australian travel advisors can not get anywhere else, as reinforced by Chief Executive Officer Alex Sharpe during his visit Down Under last year (*CW* 10 Oct).

"We are one of the largest sellers, if not the largest in the world of luxury cruising, so when we launched with 12 cruise partners, the strategy was to tailor the program around our Australian members' needs," Harrison said.

She added Signature has not come into the local market with its full suite of cruise partners by design, with the initial focus being solely on luxury cruise brands, before a planned introduction of its range of marquee expedition brands down the track.

Signature's dozen SIG Cruise Pro partners in Australia is just a third of the 36 the network boasts in the United States.

"We haven't [entered the Australian market] with the full suite because...we are really



trying to be attractive to agencies that have a luxury customer base - whether that is just luxury cruise or across all of our programs."

Testament to its appeal, Harrison also revealed that several members had joined its network purely based on its luxury cruise appeal.

Outlining some of the major points of difference with its competitors, Harrison said its "compelling price point" is a major factor, as well as exclusive benefits, value proposition, and first-class training program. *AB*

A Royal donation

ROYAL Caribbean Group has announced a donation to the Seaman Mission in Norway, to help the organisation's four centres across the country continue to offer free support to visiting seafarers.

The Seaman Mission will use this donation to enhance its services and facilities, ensuring seafarers have access to essential resources and a welcoming environment while away from home.

The new funding will support all crew members who visit Norway's Seafarers Welfare Centres every year in Alesund, Bergen, Honningsvåg and Stavanger, with the money to be allocated to various initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for seafarers.

This will include free-of-charge welfare services, as well as various enrichment and recreational activities.

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EVERY now and then, a car will crash through someone's front door.

To that, Norway's Johan Helberg says 'hold my beer'.

Helberg was asleep in his home a few metres up from the shore in Norway's majestic fjords, and was awoken to find an huge container ship had run aground in his front yard.

The massive 135-metre long *NCL Salten* - unaffiliated with Norwegian Cruise Line - ran aground almost literally at the front door.

Even more stunningly, Helberg said he slept through the entire ordeal, alerted first when a panicked neighbour phoned him after failing to wake him via the doorbell.

Several hours later, the huge red and green hulled ship was still outside the wooden house waiting to be refloated.

The only damage caused was a slight heating pipe rupture.

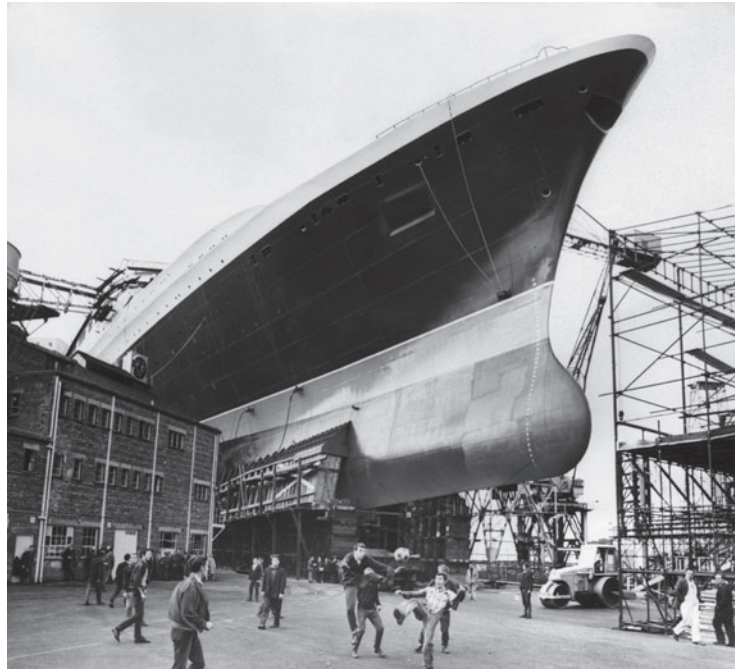
When interviewed by local media, Helberg seemed nonplussed by the situation, despite the chance of disaster.

"If the ship had hit the rocky cliff right next to it, it would have lifted up and hit the house hard.

"It's a very bulky new neighbour but it will soon go away," he said.

The ship has apparently run aground twice before in the past two years.

Cunard captures our heart



CUNARD Line's new 'Sea of Glamour' exhibition (*CW* 11 Jan 2023) will feature guest stories from around the world, in celebration of the company's 185th anniversary.

The exhibition, curated by English photographer Mary McCartney, features 185 images sourced from Cunard's archives, as well as a collection of guest pictures, chosen from more than 1,000 submitted photographs.

Archive images will include rare shots of Hollywood icons, musicians, politicians, and members of the royal family.

The exhibition will take place at the Royal Liver Building in Liverpool, Cunard's spiritual home, during the spring, before setting sail around the world on the cruise line's fleet.

"Curating 'Sea of Glamour' for Cunard has been such a

brilliant project for me as a photographer," McCartney said.

"To delve into 185 years of photographic history, I had the privilege of exploring not only Cunard's iconic legacy but also the real, heartfelt moments shared by its guests on board," she said. *MS*

NCL phone scam

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) guests are being targeted by a new phone scam, an employee of the cruise line has warned online.

The anonymous, US-based employee described how a scammer posing as NCL's air department convinced a guest to book flights for their large group of travellers, leading to their card being compromised.

The scammer then called back weeks later claiming a price drop and requested new card details - leaving the guest US\$20,000 out of pocket.

The employee pointed out Norwegian's American airfare deal, which offers free airfare for the second guest, does not guarantee specific flights like this guest was offered by the scammer, and said to be suspicious of any calls claiming to come from a cruise line.

The employee warned sharing too much about your cruise plans online could cause you to be targeted.

Norwegian was contacted for comment on the scam.



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