

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **MSC Cruises**.

FCTG to acquire more cruise?

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) is reportedly in talks to purchase UK-based online cruise agency Iglu.

The acquisition would further expand FCTG's cruise portfolio, which also includes UK brand Scott Dunn.

In response to the speculation, FCTG took to the ASX this morning to deny that any agreement between the two parties had been reached.

"Any discussions are ongoing, incomplete and confidential," the company stated.

The deal, if it went ahead, would be worth an estimated £100 million (A\$202 million).

Quiet Med to be quietly popular in Aus

OCEANIA Cruises' new 'Quiet Mediterranean' program (**CW** 07 Nov) will be particularly popular among Australians, according to Senior Vice President Int'l & Consumer Sales Steve Odell.

The luxury cruise veteran, answering a question from **Cruise Weekly** on board the line's new *Oceania Allura* during her christening ceremony last week (**CW** 17 Nov), said the take up would be strong from Australia, given the program's shoulder season focus is typically when international airfares are cheaper in our market.

"The research in Australia says it's a really good time for airfares, and so we can get to Europe at a lower cost and we can do what we normally do as a cruise experience," Odell explained.

"In Australia, not everybody wants to be away in the summer, there are people who say 'it



doesn't cost \$10,000 to fly to Europe in business class, it costs four," he added.

"I think we will pull from Asia and Australia, we'll pull from North America."

Odell said Oceania's initial sales for its Quiet Med program are so far tracking well, despite the relatively unfamiliar territory the concept traces.

"At the moment, we're on the right trajectory...it's a big step,

and I think it's about targeting the right travellers," he added. **MS**

Odell is **pictured** with the cruise line's Senior Director of Sales EMEA Gabriella Fonzo.

MSC goes half-price

MSC Cruises is offering up to 50% off more than 6,000 sailings as part of its biggest-ever Black Friday sale.

See the **back page** for details.

BLACK FRIDAY

UP TO

50% OFF

YOUR WORLD INCLUDED™

All Speciality Dining

Shipboard Gratuities

Unlimited WiFi

plus choice of:

Complimentary Wine & Beer

or Shore Excursion Credit

[VIEW VOYAGES](#)



OCEANIA
CRUISES®
YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

THE FINEST CUISINE AT SEA®. AWARD-WINNING ITINERARIES. SMALL SHIP LUXURY™.
VISIT OCEANIACRUISES.COM OR CALL 1300 355 200 (AU), 0800 625 691 (NZ)

[DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT](#)

*Terms and conditions apply. Visit OceaniaCruises.com for complete Terms & Conditions.



WHILE sightseeing is a highlight for many cruise-goers, a blind traveller has revealed how the sounds and sensations of a recent sailing around Alaska with Princess Cruises created a memorable experience.

"The first time I heard a whale spout, it silenced an entire catamaran," Sassy Wyatt told *The Independent*.

"I couldn't see the whales rising, but I didn't need to; the sound was enough - the hush that followed said everything.

"It turns out not everything needs to be seen to be felt."

Wyatt even took part in a high-wire course and while she couldn't see the view, she felt it and was able to conjure the picture in her mind.

"Accessibility wasn't treated like an awkward afterthought, it was built into the design," she said, noting the braille and tactile numbers outside every cabin, audio announcements in lifts, and braille signage throughout the ship.

Wyatt also praised Princess Cruises' staff for their attentiveness, with the cabin steward remembering where she left things and reading the menus aloud, "patiently and in full".

Ponant Smithsonian pair-up



PONANT has partnered with Smithsonian Journeys - the travel program of the Smithsonian Institution - to launch a collection of small ship cruises for 2027.

The offering includes 35 departures across all seven continents, with included shore excursions in every port.

Each departure will feature two Smithsonian Journeys experts on board, who will lead engaging lectures and informal discussions throughout the voyage.

Among the highlights and new to the collection is 'A Solar Eclipse at Sea: Voyage Along the Iberian Peninsula', which presents the rare opportunity to witness the 2027 solar eclipse from an ideal vantage point - aboard a ship in the Mediterranean, directly within the band of totality.

Jim Zimelman, senior geologist emeritus for the Center for Earth and Planetary Studies at Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, will be among several experts on board, providing context and insight into the eclipse through lectures and informal conversations.

Guests will enjoy complimentary airport transfers on embarkation and disembarkation days, ensuring a seamless travel experience, and all-inclusive pricing with shore excursions, enrichment, and transfers.

"We are delighted to offer

travel advisors a thoughtfully curated collection of small-ship cruises that combine immersive enrichment with Ponant's signature luxury," said Walter Littlejohn III, Senior Vice President of Smithsonian Journeys.

"These voyages are designed to inspire your clients and support advisors with experiences that truly stand out."

Agents can learn more and make fully commissionable bookings through Smithsonian Journeys website **HERE**. *JM*

Silent for science

HX EXPEDITIONS has launched 'silent science boats' in the Antarctic and Arctic to reduce underwater noise.

The two MK5 vessels are fully electric and feature RAD Propulsion's RAD 40 drive system, which are considered the most advanced electric drives on the market.

Operated by trained drivers, the easy-to manoeuvre soft inflatable boats (SIBs) can cater for eight to 16 passengers, and are currently operating aboard *MS Fram* and *MS Fridtjof Nansen*.

The vessels enable silent discovery in remote destinations, furthering the cruise line's commitment and lower-impact exploration.

Ama boosts Africa

AMAWATERWAYS has expanded its Africa Safaris & Wildlife Cruise program with four new itineraries, beginning Aug 2026.

The journeys combine a luxurious three-night Chobe River cruise aboard the 28-passenger *Zambezi Queen* with immersive land programs featuring Victoria Falls and newly added destinations such as Kenya, Namibia, Zanzibar and the Skeleton Coast.

Ranging from nine to 18 nights, the new itineraries include 'From the Cape to the Falls', 'Iconic Africa', 'Classic Kenya & Southern Africa' and 'African Wonders & the Skeleton Coast'.

BLACK FRIDAY SALE

UP TO **40% OFF**
PLUS
UP TO **USD \$2,000**
AIR SAVINGS



ATLAS
OCEAN VOYAGES®



LEARN MORE

**Represented by
Cruise Traveller
Ph: 1800 507 777**

SH Black Fri offer

SWAN Hellenic has launched its Black Friday expedition collection, with savings of up to \$1,700 per person on 36 cruises worldwide, plus an extra \$1,000 onboard credit.

The offer applies to a selection of 2026-27 voyages ranging from six to 20 nights, for bookings made by 02 Dec - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Sail like an explorer

HX EXPEDITIONS is inviting guests to spend one night in a recreated late 19th-century expedition cabin that aims to "capture the spirit of HX's earliest explorers".

The 1896 cabin will be available exclusively on board *MS Fridtjof Nansen* from 29 Jan 2026, complete with handcrafted period furnishings, authentic scents, and special in-cabin touches.

The immersive historical setting was based on meticulously researched expedition cabins from the late 19th century.

Guests can book the cabin as an add-on to any voyage for €450 per night (approx A\$800) for single or double occupancy.

Availability is strictly limited to one night per guest, per sailing, with 50% of all profits from the bookings to be donated to the HX Foundation - find out more [HERE](#).

Mawson to Sydney

AURORA Expeditions' new ship *Douglas Mawson* has set sail from Singapore and is making her way towards Sydney, where she is due to arrive on 24 Nov.

The cruise line will celebrate the official launch and naming ceremony of the ship on 27 Nov against the backdrop of Sydney's iconic harbour.

Douglas Mawson will then sail to Hobart before embarking on her inaugural voyage - a 10-night circumnavigation of Tasmania - on 01 Dec.

Oceania's new success pillars



OCEANIA Cruises is known for its 'Finest Cuisine at Sea' tag line, however this will be one of four brand pillars the line anchors around over the coming years.

Chief Commercial Officer Nathan Hickman, speaking on last week's christening voyage of the new *Oceania Allura* (pictured) revealed three other new brand pillars, including: "immersive destinations", "intimate, luxurious ships", "and "genuine hospitality", to add to its culinary offering.

These four brand pillars have informed the design of the line's upcoming ship *Oceania Sonata* (CW yesterday), which will be the largest vessel it has ever built, in both tonnage and capacity.

This allows Oceania to dedicate more space to its public areas and amenities - a key tenet to encouraging passengers from other cruise lines to graduate to its offering.

"For many of our guests, when someone comes to ocean cruises, it's not their first cruise - they're

experienced cruisers, and a lot of times, they're stepping up from a contemporary or premium line," he explained.

"What we've learned is they don't want to trade off, they want to upgrade; they don't want to have less dining experiences, they don't want to have less enrichment opportunities."

Oceania will ensure this by adding two new culinary experiences to *Sonata*, in addition to the dozens of venues *Allura* features, with no restaurants being removed.

The profile of venues will also change, Hickman revealed, to offer guests more variety and more styles of dining, particularly on longer cruises.

"After 10, 14, 21 days, six months, there are only so many multi-course dinners you can have in succession...we've found our casual dining, our more relaxed dining, to be becoming more and more popular," Hickman explained. *MS*

CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Last chance to nominate

With just a few days to go before nominations close, CLIA's 23rd Annual Cruise Industry Awards are already shaping up to be a fantastic celebration of our Australasian travel agent community.

This year's nominations are showing genuine flair and individuality, but we'd still love to see more - and there's still time to get involved.

The deadline for nominations is on Friday before midnight, so now is the time to speak up. Every CLIA member can put themselves forward or nominate a colleague.

Importantly, the CLIA awards are never out of reach and they're certainly not a foregone conclusion. Fresh faces and new perspectives are just as important as experience or longevity, so don't be modest and don't rule yourself out.

Winning a CLIA award can provide an incredible boost to your career, and winners have often gone on to become some of our community's most successful members.

Some of the best opportunities among this year's awards are in the promotions categories, where individuals and agencies have a chance to demonstrate their creativity and strategic thinking.

These are some of my favourite categories, because they highlight those who put real passion into promoting cruise.

Now is the time to act - [CLICK HERE](#) to nominate.



EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman
Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury,
Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper
Editorial Director - Damian Francis
Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller
info@cruiseweekly.com.au

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
Business Development Manager
Kara Stanley
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220
Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220



MSC
CRUISES

FOR A GREATER BEAUTY

BLACK
friday



OUR BIGGEST OFFER YET UP TO 50% OFF CRUISES*

With over **6,000 sailings** included, your clients can save big across the **Mediterranean, Northern Europe, Caribbean, Asia & more**. Plus, this offer is combinable with Voyagers Club discount!

OUR TOP PICKS



MEDITERRANEAN

MSC WORLD EUROPA

Departure from **BARCELONA**

08 May 2027 | 7 Nights

(Port & Hotel Charges additional)

DELUXE INTERIOR ~~\$1,989~~ **\$989** p.p*



CARIBBEAN & ANTILLES

MSC SEASHORE

Departure from **PORT CANAVERAL**

06 September 2026 | 7 Nights

(Port & Hotel Charges additional)

DELUXE INTERIOR ~~\$1,149~~ **\$569** p.p*



NORTHERN EUROPE

MSC PREZIOSA

Departure from **HAMBURG**

15 November 2026 | 7 Nights

(Port & Hotel Charges additional)

DELUXE INTERIOR ~~\$1,009~~ **\$499** p.p*

*T&Cs apply. Ends 01 December 2025.

Book now at mscbook.com | Call 1300 028 502