

Cruise Weekly today

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

New MSC campaign

MSC Cruises is inviting travellers to discover the magic of unplanned moments, as part of a new global campaign titled 'The Best Holiday Ever'.

The new push, developed in partnership with advertising agency McCann, features a reinterpretation of the iconic track *ABC* by The Jackson 5, including newly written lyrics that highlight the breadth of experiences and services offered on board a cruise with the brand.

MSC's new campaign reinforces the line's spirit of discovery, warmth, and hospitality, while reimagining a globally loved hit in a way that aligns seamlessly with the campaign's spirit.

The new brand push is centred around 30- and 60-second spots, highlighting the cruise line's key experiences, such as food & beverage, entertainment, kids & family, MSC Yacht Club, the fleets' design elements, wellness, destinations, shopping, and more - **CLICK HERE** to view.



Singing a new Sonata



OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled substantially evolved suites aboard its upcoming *Oceania Sonata*, the first ship in her namesake new class.

The vessel is set to debut in Aug 2027, offering a greater variety and number of suites, as first flagged by **CW** late last year on board the christening voyage of *Oceania Allura* (**CW** 18 Nov).

A third of *Sonata*'s accommodations will be dedicated to suites, with the ship set to carry 1,390 guests in total.

The four Owner's suites, each sprawling over 230m², will command the aft corners of decks 10 and 11, offering sweeping 180-degree views over the ocean from their wraparound verandas.

Each Owner's suite will feature two bedrooms - a first for Oceania - including a master with a king-size bed, and spa-inspired bathroom; as well as a guest bedroom with a queen-size bed, private bath, and floor-to-ceiling glass doors opening onto the private veranda.

Sonata's eight Vista suites, ranging from around 140m² to

around 175m², are terraced at the aft of the ship, treating guests to uninterrupted ocean views from their veranda.

Interiors boast plush furnishings and intricate marble accents, complemented by generous living and dining areas.

Amenities in the master bathroom include double vanities, a rainforest shower, and a porcelain soaking tub.

There will be 16 reimagined Oceania suites, ranging from around 90m² to around 130m², providing large living, dining, and bedroom spaces, and a private teak veranda.

Each suite is finished with a king-size bed and a marble-clad bathroom (**pictured**).

Sonata will also introduce an all-new accommodation category: 50 Horizon suites, which will sit between the Penthouse and Oceania categories.

Horizon suites are set to offer around 55m² of living and bedroom space, including a walk-in wardrobe and an oversized veranda, appointed with luxurious lounging furniture. *MS*

Cruise the Far East

A **NEW** government-backed initiative in the Russian Far East hopes to attract 50,000 cruisers annually to the region.

The initiative will launch in the spring, with the Ministry for the Development of Russia's Far East to subsidise procurement for a handful of cruise ships operating in destinations such as Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands.



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Princess expands

PRINCESS Cruises has expanded its Northern Europe portfolio with new itineraries and shore excursions in 2027.

The line's *Regal Princess* will sail on almost 50 voyages in the region, ranging in length from seven to 64 days.

Passengers will visit more than 50 destinations across almost 20 countries.

One of the highlights will be the 64-day Ultimate European Journey, which will give travellers even more exciting ways to explore Northern Europe on a "coolcation".

There will also be a 49-day 'Northern Europe Explorer', sailing from Southampton to Stockholm, Cobh, and more.

Silversea inherits the world



SILVERSEA guests have embarked on 'The Curious and the Sea': the cruise line's 2026 world cruise, which will travel over 140 days, visiting almost 60 destinations across 30 countries.

Silver Dawn departs today from Fort Lauderdale, with the cruise beginning after an evening of celebration at an exclusive 'Bon Voyage' event at The Boca Raton, a luxury resort and club on Florida's Gold Coast.

The party featured a 1920s theme, inspired by the resort's 100-year anniversary, with guests donning flapper fashion and enjoying music of the jazz age.

World cruise guests will first set sail for Central America, toward Ecuador and Peru, through the Panama Canal.

Easter Island, French Polynesia, and the South Pacific will follow, with guests exploring New Zealand and taking part in a semi-circumnavigation of Australia - a first on a Silversea world cruise.

Guests will then explore Southeast Asia, crossing the Bay of Bengal to Sri Lanka and India, before delving into South Africa and Africa's west coast, then ending in Lisbon on 27 May.

Bespoke events will include 'Polynesian Dreams' in French Polynesia, which will see guests sample local flavours and learn

traditional dances; and 'The Magic of Mystery Island' in Vanuatu, offering passengers a glimpse of regional dance rituals, fresh island cuisine, and a chance to snorkel in crystal-clear waters

Guests will also enjoy performances by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, recognised as one of the world's best dance bands, who will come on board during the West Africa segment of the voyage.

The cruise includes additional enrichments, such as a partnership with world-class guest chefs, bringing culinary diversity through the introduction of bespoke tasting menus and experiences, such as S.A.L.T. Talks and S.A.L.T. Lab classes.

These will take place across a number of ports of call, such as Lima, Melbourne, and Singapore.

"With 'The Curious and the Sea,' we have created a journey that celebrates the essence of exploration," president Bert Hernandez said.

"From exclusive cultural celebrations to extraordinary culinary moments, this voyage is designed to spark curiosity and deepen connections with the world's diverse cultures and landscapes, all delivered with the personalised service that defines Silversea," he added. *MS*

Guernsey pax up

CRUISE visitor numbers to Guernsey are set to rise this year, despite fewer ship visits, the destination's port authority has revealed.

Fifty-one cruise ships are expected to arrive at Guernsey this year, which is 13 fewer than 2025.

However, the increased capacity of Guernsey's largest ships will bring more passengers in total, with up to 50,000 expected this year.

Even more guests are expected in 2027, Guernsey Ports hopes, with cruise operations manager Mark Renouf saying provisional 2027 bookings would result in a significant passenger uptick.

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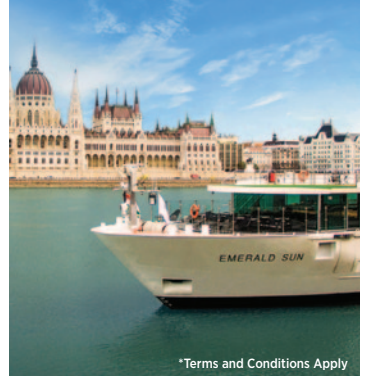
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NO ONE wants to be mugged while on holidays...except, perhaps, if the assailants are particularly awesome.

One family from the US were 'mugged' by a group of juvenile humpback whales while vacationing in Maui, and it's an experience they said would keep them coming back to the holiday spot.

The Bunce family found themselves surrounded by the curious creatures during a whale-watching expedition, with the young whales hanging out by the boat, spouting through their blowhole.

The encounter, which was captured on video **HERE**, lasted about five minutes - a pretty significant amount of time to get up close and personal with the largest creatures on the planet.

"That term 'mugging' is related to the approach limits and the inability to move your vessel when the whale approaches and is within 100 yards here in Hawaii," the Pacific Whale Foundation's chief scientist explained to local media.

"They're holding the vessel hostage, in a sense, and so they're getting 'mugged'."



Aqua taps Michelin chef



AQUA Expeditions has announced the appointment of Chef Karime Lopez as Consulting Chef for its newest ultra-luxury expedition ship *Aqua Lares*.

Tasked with delivering a "destination-driven dining experience at sea", Lopez (**pictured**) will lead the culinary concept on board, and design menus for the ship, which is set to launch in the Seychelles next month (**CW** 08 Aug).

Born and raised in Mexico, Lopez has worked in leading kitchens across the country, as well as in Spain, Peru, Japan, and Italy.

In 2018, she became the first Mexican woman to earn a Michelin star for her work as Head Chef at Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura in Florence, part of the Kering family of brands.

That same year, Lopez was named Chef of the Year in Italy, followed by further international recognition with the Best Chef Art Award in 2022 and Best Outstanding Chef Abroad by CANIRAC in 2023.

Under her direction, guests dining aboard *Lares* can expect menus that balance Mediterranean influences with coastal Creole flavours, elevated through Japanese techniques.

Signature dishes will include a grilled Zanzibar-spiced rib eye finished with a reduced demi-glace, and lobster tagliatelle coated in ocean jus, simmered with lobster.

Other highlights include glazed short ribs with smoked carrot puree and Creole shrimp curry with fried plantain. **JM**



Starting the year strong

AS WE return after the festive period, it's encouraging to begin the year by recognising outstanding achievements by our members across the country.

The NSW town of Eden had plenty to celebrate over the holiday season, welcoming passengers from its 200th cruise ship and marking 20 years of cruise operations since the first ship sailed into port in Nov 2005.

This milestone was celebrated with the arrival of *Celebrity Edge*, highlighting the important role rural destinations continue to play in delivering memorable cruise experiences and spreading economic benefit beyond capital cities.

Queensland cruise tourism also reached a major milestone with the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal marking its 500th cruise ship call.

The facility has rapidly established itself as a world-class tourism gateway since opening in 2022.

Behind every ship call is a coordinated effort from around 130 staff working largely behind the scenes to ensure passengers start their holidays sooner and return home safely.

With each cruise visit contributing around \$1 million to Queensland's economy, the terminal continues to deliver tangible benefits for local businesses, jobs, and tourism growth.

In Tasmania, TasPorts has supported the development of a new 'Tassie Cruise Tourism' education module for operators, which builds on the valuable resources developed by Tourism Tasmania and the RTOs.

The program aims to ensure more Tasmanian businesses can capture the benefits of a sector that injects between \$140-\$150 million into the state's economy each year.

It's certainly a positive note on which to start the year.