



Cruise Weekly today

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

Firenze cancels

MULTIPLE autumn sailings for Carnival Cruise Line's *Carnival Firenze* to Baja California have been cancelled, the cruise line has confirmed.

The sailings were set to take place between 12 Oct and 16 Nov, with impacted guests able to either book a comparable cruise or cancel their reservation in exchange for a full refund.

Voyages were set to sail for three and four nights out of Los Angeles.

Carnival also recently cancelled a number of voyages to Puerto Vallarta south of Baja, after the port was rocked with violence following the killing of a drug lord.

Luxe-washing is a fool's errand

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian market is especially prone to ambiguity around what type of cruise experiences are deemed 'luxury', Silversea SVP global sales & e-commerce Carol Cabezas (pictured) indicated during a recent visit to Australia.

Speaking with *Cruise Weekly*, the senior sales executive said the local team has relayed to her that some travel products are being mislabelled as luxury, creating a degree of customer confusion.

However, Cabezas said brands like Silversea are not too perturbed by the trend, because misappropriating the term will ultimately lead to dissatisfied customers who won't return.

"There is no benefit to claiming something that you are not because you will just set up the guest for disappointment," Cabezas affirmed.



"I have every confidence that we are properly describing what we are delivering such that the guest is going to arrive and feel like they were sold the right bill of goods," she added.

SVP Adam Radwanski added that while it "may be tempting" for marketers to use the term luxury because it's easier to acquire clients, the tactic will ultimately end in disappointment.

"The fact that you might be serving Prosecco or Champagne on board doesn't make you luxury - luxury is about the fine

details," Radwanski said.

Cabezas said that customer feedback scores are one of the key ways for luxury brands to know how they are tracking in terms of guest expectations.

The cruise line has a "thriving community" of Venetian Society loyalty guests who, in recent years, have been rating the company higher than ever before.

"To me that indicates that we have that proper communication of setting expectations that our guests are going to love once they get on," Cabezas said. AB



VIKING

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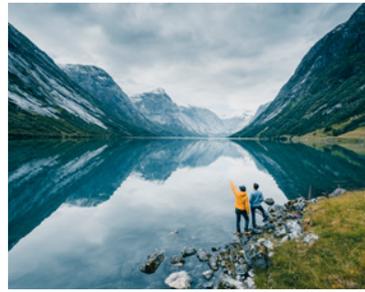
EVENT TIME ACROSS REGIONS:

11.00AM AEDT – SYDNEY, MELBOURNE

10.30AM ACST – ADELAIDE

10.00AM AEST – BRISBANE

8.00AM AWST – PERTH



Seabourn Denali

SEABOURN Cruise Line has introduced 'The Denali Experience', which will extend its Alaska voyages into the heart of the Alaskan national park in 2027 and 2028.

The optional seven-night pre-cruise Seabourn Journey will offer enhanced access and immersive experiences showcasing Alaska's wildlife and landscapes.

Scheduled to depart from Anchorage before select Seabourn Alaska voyages in 2027 and 2028, the Denali Experience begins with a scenic rail journey into the state's interior.

Highlights include flightseeing for views over glaciers and wilderness across the national park, and an exclusive wildlife encounter at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, where guests may observe native species such as lynx, moose, brown bears, and wood bison.

There will also be a farewell dinner at the iconic Tracy's King Crab Shack, a must-stop destination for famous crab cakes, king crab buckets, Alaskan beer, and more.



Viking adds Euro ship



VIKING has taken delivery of its newest river ship in Europe, *Viking Eldir*.

The vessel was built at the Neptun Werft shipyard in Rostock-Warnemunde, and will sail Viking's itineraries on the Rhine, Main, and Danube rivers.

Eldir carries 190 guests in 95 staterooms, and features a space-saving square bow, three full decks, an indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace, asymmetric corridors, and true two-room suites.

"We are pleased to welcome the *Viking Eldir* to our growing river fleet," chair & chief executive officer Torstein Hagen said.

"With our exclusive docking locations, we proudly bring our guests closer to destinations along the great rivers of the

world," he added.

"Now, with the addition of our newest Viking Longship, we look forward to inviting even more curious travellers to explore Europe in Viking comfort."

The cruise line expects to take delivery of 22 additional river ships by 2028, as well as 10 additional ocean ships by 2031, and two additional newly announced expedition ships by 2031 (*CW* 04 Mar).

These orders will see Viking's fleet expand to 112 river ships in 2028 and 25 ocean and expedition ships in 2031.

The announcement comes following Viking's recent reporting of a massive revenue hike of 21.9% for the fiscal year, with income totalling US\$6.5b (approximately A\$9.2b). *MS*

Virgin's AI increase

VIRGIN Voyages has introduced more than 1,500 AI assistants since debuting the concept last year (*CW* 13 Oct).

In Oct the cruise line partnered with Google Cloud to launch a fleet of AI assistants via Gemini Enterprise, which have been rolled out fleetwide to support various business needs.

Numbering just 50 at launch, the fleet has now grown by 2,900%, delivering a fundamental shift in how Virgin operates.

"Our commitment to becoming AI-fluent is so we can grow, win the hearts and minds of our sailors, and use tools and technology to create joy - removing the burden of mind-numbing, repetitive work," Virgin said.

"Google Cloud is the only partner that could have helped us achieve this.

"Their mission is as bold as ours, and that's exactly why this collaboration is creating a sea change in how we do what we do."

Virgin's range of AI agents include 'Email Ellie', a communications marketing assistant trained on Virgin's brand voice, which generates hyper-personalised e-mail marketing outreach; while 'Know Your Sailors', equips the cruise line's team with specific guest knowledge.



THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Australian Cruise Association CEO **Jill Abel** on the opportunities for cruise in 2026.

➔ **CLICK HERE TO READ**



A RED fox recently lived out the dreams of many, stowing away on a ship and making its way from the United Kingdom to the United States.

The sly fox stowed away on a cargo ship departing from Southampton, and was discovered on board during the vessel's transit to New York.

He is now in the care of the Bronx Zoo, although it is still not clear how he made his way on board.

"He seems to be settling in well," Keith Lovett, the zoo's director of animal programs, told the Associated Press. "It's gone through a lot."

Riviera to add

RIVIERA Travel River Cruises will introduce another European river ship in 2028, the cruise line confirmed this week at the ASTA River Cruise Expo in the United States.

Let them eat chocolate



HOLLAND America Line brought Grand Voyage guests together for a celebratory chocolate afternoon tea in Sydney last week, marking the rare meetup of two of the brand's vessels.

Zaandam and *Volendam* both called in Sydney on Sat, as each ship sails on a Grand Voyage.

Guests from both vessels boarded *Zaandam* for an afternoon tea with culinary ambassador Jacques Torres, who curated a menu of signature chocolate creations.

Attendees enjoyed an elegant

selection that included scones and finger sandwiches, as well as treats created by Torres exclusively for the event, such as chocolate madeleines, chocolate cane de Bordeaux, Le Lion chocolate dipped marshmallows and Gateau de Voyage, paired with Holland America's Royal Dutch Tea Time Blend.

The celebration was joined by the captains and senior officers from both ships (**pictured**), who attended alongside guests to help mark the significance of the two vessels meeting in port. *MS*

Oceania campaign

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled 'The Joy of Travelling Well', a new global campaign.

The push aims to capture Oceania's belief that "the most meaningful journeys are those taken at a considered pace, where every detail is thoughtfully curated, and every moment feels personal."

It will be guided by four foundational tenets: immersive itineraries; intimate, luxurious ships; genuine hospitality; and 'The Finest Cuisine at Sea' - the cruise line's long-standing brand promise.

The brand evolution has been timed with its transition to an adults-only cruise line (*CW* 08 Jan).

"The launch of 'The Joy of Travelling Well' campaign offers a clear expression of who we are and what sits at the very heart of Oceania Cruises," chief luxury officer Jason Montague said.

Advertising will launch across digital, social, print, and TV, touchpoints, as well as direct-to-consumer channels.



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