



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### HLO cruise exits

#### EXCLUSIVE

**TWO** members of the Helloworld Travel cruise team, commercial relationship manager Jan Harrington and marketing manager Lauryn Woodward, have left the business in previous weeks, **Cruise Weekly** can reveal.

Harrington has not decided upon the next step in her career, while Woodward will be taking up a role outside the industry, **CW** understands.

The two departures follow another exit last month, which saw head of cruise growth Juliana Nasmith leave to take up a role as head of sales & operations for luxury cruise agency Panache Cruises.

Harrington has been in the cruise sector for more than 25 years, and had served in her role with Helloworld for more than three years.

She has also worked for Cruise Guru and Flight Centre Travel Group previously.

Woodward began in her role at the same time as Harrington, in Jan 2023, in what was her first job in the travel industry.

The company saw positive results for its cruise division at its most recent results announcement last month, with wholesale bookings up 17% in the first half of the year (**CW** 25 Feb).

Total cruise TTV in Australia was consistent with the prior corresponding period, Helloworld noted.

However chief operating officer Cinzia Burnes has noted slower bookings due to the Iran war (**CW** 12 Mar).

**CW** reached out to Helloworld for comment.

## Cruise is hot for LTC



**THE** Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) has witnessed significant growth in the cruise sector over the past 12 months, GM Nikki Glading has revealed.

Speaking at the opening of LTC's Product Showcase on Fri, Glading (pictured left with Flight Centre Travel Group global managing director luxury Danielle Galloway) pointed to cruise as one of the key growth sectors for the luxury travel house.

"Cruise has grown 19% year-on-year in ocean, 66% year-on-year in river, and 44% year-on-year in expedition," she said.

Pressed on why cruise is such a high-growth sector for LTC, Glading said the sector's top end is as diverse as ever.

"Luxury cruise used to be one mould, and now there is luxury cruise in all different segments," Glading told **Cruise Weekly** on the sidelines of the conference.

"There's now a luxury cruise for adventure travellers, there's a luxury cruise for river cruise travellers, there's luxury cruise for small ship, there's luxury cruise for big ships."

The opportunity available in the sector has seen LTC sharpen the cruise product available in its Galeries de Luxe portfolio, particularly with the experiences

offered to members.

"Our members have some frustrations with the standard offering in the sort of amenity programs that are offered with other luxury consortia," Glading explained to **CW**.

She said LTC doesn't invite a partner to join its Cruises de Luxe product collection, part of Galeries de Luxe, unless they're prepared to feature their included experiences on all of their voyages so that advisors "do not have to open a spreadsheet and try and see whether or not it's included."

"They've got the safety of knowing, because of our partnership, that cruise lines that join Cruises de Luxe, that experiential inclusion will be on every single voyage."

Luxury travel is now one of the fastest-growing segments of the global economy, Glading added, with the market set to command \$2 trillion globally by 2030.

The luxury sector, which has been booming since the pandemic, will not be slowing down this year, Glading said, with 76% of luxury travel advisors reporting a surge in demand for shoulder season travel.

"Clients are actively rejecting the crowds," she said. **MS**

### Royal giving back

**ROYAL** Caribbean has announced a new public beach path in the Zona Hotelera Sur, as part of its upcoming Royal Beach Club Cozumel, which is set to open on 31 Dec.

As part of the cruise line's commitment to community wellbeing and sustainable tourism, the new path will significantly improve public beach access, ensure greater coastal accessibility, improved safety, and enhanced facilities.

Construction is scheduled to begin following the completion of regulatory and environmental permits, with the current access to remain open until the new facilities are fully operational.



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## TasPorts' interim

**TASPORTS** has appointed Allan Gray as interim chief executive officer, for a fixed term through to 02 Oct.

Gray will lead the organisation as it undertakes a search for a permanent CEO, following the departure of Anthony Donald, who announced his exit last year (*CW* 17 Dec).

Chair Greg McCann said Gray brings extensive international port leadership experience to the role.

"His track record in assisting ports and governments develop solutions to complex port and supply chain challenges makes him a highly suitable and capable candidate to lead TasPorts through this time of transition," he said.

## Hapag to Amazon

**HAPAG-LLOYD** Cruises has launched its 2026 Amazon season, which will see it expedition deep into the rainforest to Iquitos.

The German cruise line will be the only brand sailing the full route from Belem, Brazil, upstream to the remote rainforest city of Iquitos, Peru, and back.

*Hanseatic Spirit* last week departed Belem on an 18-day upstream expedition along the legendary river for the first of two voyages this year.

## Celeb goes beyond the river



**CELEBRITY** River Cruises has unveiled an extensive destination discovery program, available across all 2027 and 2028 itineraries, as well as pre- and post-cruise stays in Prague, Budapest and Amsterdam.

The program features four experience categories, including the Storyteller series, which offers experiences guided by residents, artists, and cultural insiders who call each destination home.

Guests can select from multiple included experiences per port, covering iconic landmarks as well as hosts' personal favourites.

In Prague, for instance, travellers will be led through the city's rich brewing traditions by a local brewer.

The cruise line has also introduced the Skillmaster Series, allowing guests to participate in local culture through hands-on experiences such as cooking and craft classes.

For example, in Budapest a local mamika (grandmother) will lead travellers through generations-old

Hungarian recipes from her own home kitchen.

There is also the Keys to the City Series, providing guests with access to curated route maps tailored to specific interests such as art, history, food, and architecture, via an innovative digital platform.

Travellers can follow interactive maps, audio guides, and video content to explore off-the-beaten path locations where local hosts at each place will provide behind-the-scenes access and exclusive experiences at working studios and craft sites.

Rounding out the program is the Celebrity Takeover Series, which offers exclusive, bespoke experiences once per sailing, designed to be the highlight of the journey.

"We've built a destination program that connects guests to Europe more personally than anything the river cruise industry has offered before," said Laura Hodges Bethge, president of Celebrity Cruises. *JM*

## Costa updates

**COSTA** Cruises has updated its itineraries for the winter 2026/27 season, including boosting deployment in the Canary Islands and Madeira.

The cruise line's flagship, *Costa Smeralda*, will operate a brand-new seven-day itinerary between the Canaries and Madeira, significantly increasing the line's guest capacity in the region.

*Costa Pacifica*, which was previously planned to sail the Canary Islands and Madeira, will instead be positioned in the Mediterranean following her planned dry dock.

The ship will offer seven-day cruises to Western Mediterranean destinations, as well as longer voyages towards Southern Europe and North Africa.

Meanwhile, the cruise line revealed it will not operate itineraries in the Middle East for the winter season 2026/27, citing the ongoing uncertainty in the region.

As a result, the previously scheduled positioning voyages of *Smeralda* to and from the Emirates will not take place, with affected guests allowed to choose any other cruise and receive €200 onboard credit per cabin.

The new itineraries for *Smeralda* and *Pacifica* will be available for booking by the end of Mar.



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**SCIENTISTS** have extracted a 23-million-year-old whale fossil from a beach in Ocean Grove, Victoria, which is “one of the most complete whale skeletons ever found in Australia”.

The team of 20 scientists and construction workers armed themselves with jackhammers, shovels, and an excavator, and set up a 25-metre exclusion zone, *The Age* reported yesterday, in what was the most complicated effort to recover a whale fossil in the history of Australian science.

Half of the ancient creature’s spine was discovered, as were some ribs, some of one of its flippers, the back of the skull, and the tip of a tooth.

“This is the closest thing we get to genuine time travel until physicists build us a machine,” said Erich Fitzgerald, who led the dig.

The fossil was discovered by a local family in Dec.

## First look at Super Ships



**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises has revealed its look at its new ‘Super Ships’ *Audrey* (pictured) and *Marlene*, which will debut next year (CW 29 Oct).

The sister ships will bring two distinct designs to Europe’s rivers, drawing from the aesthetics of the celebrated actresses they are named for: Audrey Hepburn and Marlene Dietrich.

Guests aboard *Audrey* will find interiors featuring a palette of greens, golds and blues, complemented by vibrant accents, patterns, and artistic tributes to the iconic actress.

Meanwhile, *Marlene’s* interiors

will blend warm tan and gold tones with accents of pink, red and blue throughout.

“One-of-a-kind design has always been central to the Uniworld experience,” president & chief executive officer Ellen Bettridge said.

“With the *Audrey* and *Marlene*, we’re celebrating two women whose style defined an era.

“These ships bring their spirit to life through thoughtful details and spaces created to deepen our guests’ connection to the destinations along the journey, and we’re excited to share a sneak peek inside.” MS

## Dreaming of more

**SEADREAM** Yacht Club has added a number of ports for its coming seasons, which will include dozens of maiden calls.

The cruise line will introduce almost 30 additional ports throughout Northern Europe, the British Isles, and the Mediterranean next year, with new calls to include Arendal, Bronnoysund, Ouistreham, Capraia, Fair Isle, Stromness, Kinsale, and Youghal.

Twenty-eight more ports will be added in 2028, including Portonovi, Visby, Fjallbacka, Port St. Charles, and Saint-Pierre.

“Our guests crave authenticity and freedom - to discover places that are difficult to reach on their own, linger longer in small harbours, and truly feel at home on a private yacht,” president & chief executive officer Andreas Brynstad said.

“The principles my father established in 2001 still guide us today - an intimate atmosphere, thoughtful attention-to-detail, and deeply personal service.”



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