



# CRUISE

## WEEKLY

*delivered daily!*



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Wednesday 18th March 2026

### Victory's renewal

**VICTORY** Cruise Lines has begun renovating its two ships, *Victory I* and *Victory II*, ahead of their upcoming seasons.

The US\$5 million program includes technical and guest-facing enhancements.

### Ama's fresh take on Europe



**AMAWATERWAYS** has become the latest cruise line to introduce low season voyages in Europe with its new 'City Escapes' program, which will offer extended stays, fewer crowds, and deeper cultural immersion in iconic cities.

The new program is offered along the Seine, Rhine and Danube rivers.

It is intentionally scheduled during quieter travel periods to allow guests to experience each destination in an even more authentic and relaxed way.

City Escapes reimagines the traditional river cruise by providing additional overnight stays, more daylight sailing, and 24 hours or more in key cities

including Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Strasbourg, and more.

The program will debut later this year, with departures scheduled in 2027 also.

AmaWaterways now also offers new pre- and post-cruise extensions in London and Rome, allowing guests to further personalise their journey with curated cultural and culinary experiences, including visits to the Vatican City, Westminster Abbey, and London's West End.

**MEANWHILE**, AmaWaterways has celebrated the christening of *AmaSofia* on the Rhine with more than 1,200 travel advisors attending the event (**pictured**).

The occasion was highlighted with a spectacular 300-drone light show over the Rhine

*AmaSofia* will reposition to the Danube in Jun, which will see her offer several popular itineraries, including a scheduled Australian famil in Aug (**CW** 24 Feb). *MS*

### Myrmell to Aroya

**FORMER** long-time cruise executive Sture Myrmell has returned to the sector as the president of Saudi Arabia-based Aroya Cruises.

He previously ran Carnival Corp in Australia for five years.

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### Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news, including a special feature from **HX**.



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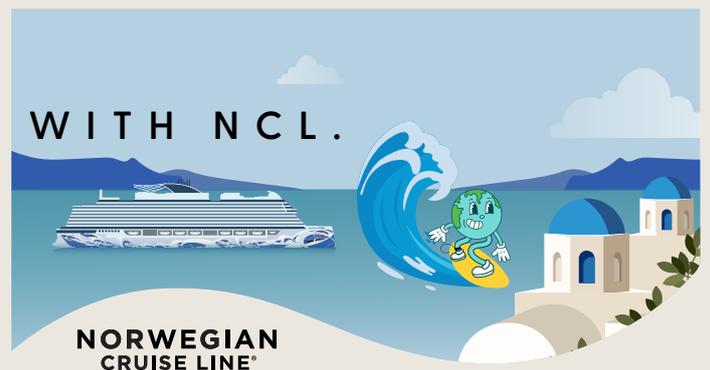


### CRUISE THROUGH WAVE

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## Croatia in private

**UNFORGETTABLE** Croatia will offer private charters from May to Oct 2027 across its fleet of six luxury vessels.

Cruises are available for five to seven nights along Croatia's Dalmatian Coast, departing mainly from Split or Dubrovnik, with the option to visit destinations including Hvar, Trogir, Vis, Korcula, Slano, and Ston.

The private charter experience includes arrival and departure transfers, daily buffet breakfasts, three-course set lunches, a daily cabin service, swim stops, and complimentary wi-fi.

Prices start from \$160,000 per week.

## Cruise jurisdictional clash

**A DISPUTE** over access to a Carnival Cruise Line ship at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal last week has exposed a legal grey area between workplace safety laws and maritime rules, after officials from the Maritime Union of Australia were denied entry to the vessel and regulators became involved.

The incident has drawn attention to the regulatory complexity surrounding foreign-flagged cruise ships operating in Australian ports, where maritime law and state workplace safety legislation can overlap.

Officials from the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) were denied access to *Carnival Adventure* last Mon, as they attempted to board under the New South Wales *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The law allows permit holders the right to enter a workplace in NSW to consult with and advise all workers present.

Inspectors from work health & safety statutory agency SafeWork also attended the scene, on request of MUA, in order to help settle the dispute, which presently remains unresolved.

MUA officials are alleging Carnival has denied its officials lawful entry to the ship, and refused to comply with Australian workplace health and safety laws.

"The actions of Carnival alongside Circular Quay were a breach of state safety laws and they will now be prosecuted," MUA assistant national secretary Jamie Newlyn said.

However Carnival told **CW** it was under no obligation to allow the MUA officials entry, and that they lacked the authority to board the ship under maritime law.

Carnival asserted the MUA officials boarding the ship would have created a security risk.

The company also claimed SafeWork was not seeking an inspection of the ship, and were

present purely in a dispute resolution capacity.

Union testimony, as well as evidence given in the Parliament of NSW last week, claimed SafeWork did seek access to the ship, and was refused.

However, SafeWork did not confirm whether its inspectors attempted to board the ship in a statement provided to **CW**.

Cruise ships typically operate under foreign flags, meaning they are primarily regulated under international maritime frameworks rather than domestic workplace laws.

Carnival pointed to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) as the proper regulator for protecting seafarers' working and living conditions, and told **CW** its officials are "always welcome on board".

AMSA investigates seafarer health and safety concerns in line with the *Navigation Act 2012* and the Maritime Labour Convention.

This includes foreign-flagged vessels which operate in Australian waters.

AMSA last month inspected and cleared another of the company's ships, *Carnival Encounter*, of any deficiencies, following whistleblower concerns in Darwin (**CW** 10 Feb).

However AMSA noted in a statement to **CW** that in this case, other WHS regulators may also have jurisdiction, in line with relevant legislation.

AMSA also reinforced it is an offence under the *Navigation Act* to board a vessel after being refused entry.

SafeWork said enquiries into the matter are ongoing, with the dispute underscoring ongoing questions about how Australia's workplace safety laws apply to foreign-flagged vessels home porting in the country.

*Adventure* is currently sailing a four-day round trip from Sydney to Moreton Island. *MS*

## ATIA crisis webinar

**A NUMBER** of cruise lines have been convened by the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) for a Middle East crisis briefing today.

Crystal, APT Travel Group, Avalon Waterways, as well as Trafalgar, are among a range of suppliers which will brief ATIA members and update on the disruption the Iran war is causing the travel industry.

The online briefing, which will take place from 12-5pm, will deliver direct operational intelligence across a series of focused 15-minute sessions, which will include live Q&As.

ATIA members can **CLICK HERE** to register for the webinar today.



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T&Cs APPLY

Wed 18th March 2026

Content produced in collaboration with HX

HX Expeditions has launched a new 10-part YouTube series filmed in the Galapagos Islands with official brand ambassador, marine biologist and TV presenter Monty Halls.

Produced in partnership with Metropolitan Touring, the series showcases the extraordinary biodiversity, conservation efforts and local communities that define the iconic archipelago.

Filmed aboard the 50-cabin *MS Santa Cruz II* on the nine-day 'In Darwin's footsteps' itinerary, the series follows Halls from Quito to the islands, with episodes including 'Legends of the land' and 'Life underwater'.

Featuring wildlife cinematography by renowned videographer Greg Lander Williams, the series also includes interviews with expedition guides and guests.



## HX brand ambassador Monty Halls launches Youtube series

Halls, who is also President of the Galapagos Conservation Trust, highlights the global importance of the islands and the need for responsible exploration.

HX CEO Gebhard Rainer reinforces the company's science-led approach and notes that Galapagos sailings operate carbon neutral.

Guests can also sail with Monty on two exclusive HX departures to Scotland's Western Isles on 7 and 17 May 2026, featuring citizen science activities, Q&A sessions and conservation-focused experiences - watch part one [HERE](#).

## Sell and win Antarctica

HX is turning your Antarctica bookings into your next unforgettable experience.

Book between 09 March and 31 May 2026 and for every Antarctica voyage you confirm and deposit, you will receive one entry into the draw to win a cabin for two on an exclusive HX Antarctica Famil in the fourth quarter of the year.

Better yet, 2026 departures earn a bonus entry, doubling your chances to experience the beautiful White Continent for yourself.

Each deposited booking during the incentive period automatically goes into the draw, giving you the opportunity to experience Antarctica firsthand with HX.

Discover more and register your bookings [HERE](#).



## Wave sale ends soon

HX EXPEDITIONS' 2026 Wave Sale offers savings of up to \$6,000 per person across all-inclusive expeditions to Antarctica, Greenland, the Galapagos and Alaska.

First-time guests also receive \$400pp to spend onboard.

Your clients have until 23 Mar to secure these savings.

The company has also introduced the HX Greenland Promise, providing added protection for guests in the unlikely event of a cancellation or change in travel advisory.

Greenland remains open to visitors and continues to welcome tourism aligned with sustainability and cultural exchange - click [HERE](#).



## New 2027/2028 Galapagos digital brochure

HX Expeditions has released its new 2027/28 Galapagos digital brochure, giving travel advisors a comprehensive guide to selling one of the world's most iconic wildlife destinations.

The brochure outlines all-inclusive itineraries aboard *MS Santa Cruz II*, including the nine-day 'In Darwin's footsteps' voyage and extended combinations featuring the legendary Machu Picchu. It highlights key wildlife

encounters, expert-led exploration, sustainability credentials and pre- and post-expedition options in Peru and Ecuador.

Designed as both an inspiration and sales tool, the brochure provides clear itinerary details, inclusions and storytelling that help advisors confidently position the Galapagos as a transformative, science-led expedition experience - click [HERE](#).

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## Stay Updated

on the latest cruise news

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**IMAGINE** being on a cruise ship with toilets which are unable to flush.

This is exactly the problem being faced by those on board MSC Cruises' *MSC Meraviglia*, according to a letter provided to guests on board the ship, after a passenger did something decidedly stupid.

Published by *Cruise Hive*, the letter detailed the stupidity of one guest who decided to flush a towel down their toilet, which broke the entire system.

This is despite the signage adorning almost every cruise ship toilet warning passengers of the dangers of flushing anything other than human waste.

The construction of ships means multiple stateroom toilets are often linked to a single sewage line, meaning a blockage in one can often affect others - sometimes even the whole vessel.

At present there has been no change to the ship's itinerary, with *Meraviglia* currently sailing a seven-night cruise to the Bahamas.

## Have a Royal Easter

**ROYAL** Caribbean has launched Easter deals on its South Pacific cruises departing from Brisbane.

Savings apply to eight- and nine-night itineraries on board *Voyager of the Seas*.

## An Encore for the rivers



**AMERICAN** Cruise Line's *American Encore* (pictured) has passed her sea trials and has commenced passage toward the Columbia and Snake rivers in the US' Pacific Northwest, where she will sail her sold-out inaugural season of voyages.

*Encore* features top-of-the-line amenities, a refined onboard aesthetic, full balcony accommodations, and the spacious Panorama Lounge.

The ship completed her sea trials last week and immediately departed from Chesapeake Shipbuilding in Maryland to begin her month-long passage west.

*Encore's* inaugural season begins on 05 May and runs through to mid-Nov.

American has introduced 20 new river ships over the past decade, since launching its first in 2018.

Eight of these ships have been built specifically for the Columbia and Snake rivers, while American also continues to develop docks and waterfront access for communities in the region.

American's Columbia and Snake itineraries feature an array of experiences showcasing the



beauty of the region, with this year's cruises ranging from nine to 16 days.

Highlights include visits to Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Teton national parks. *MS*

## Royal's got talent

**ROYAL** Caribbean has announced the debut of *America's Got Talent LIVE* on board *Legend of the Seas* when the new vessel sets sail in Europe in Aug.

Forming part of the Icon-class vessel's wider entertainment lineup, the brand-new show will feature performers from the various *Got Talent* iterations, including magicians, musicians, acrobats, aerialists, and more.

On board, guests can also tune into a production of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and enjoy high-energy performances at Absolute Zero, the largest ice arena at sea.



## A time for action

**AGAINST** an uncertain global backdrop, the sector is continuously navigating geopolitical tension, economic volatility and shifting deployment patterns.

These dynamics highlight the need for Australia to present as a 'bucket list' destination for guests, with safety and operational confidence.

It is within this context that the ACA Strategic Action Plan, launched earlier this month, represents an important and timely step forward.

It unites a broad range of advocacy priorities into a single, coordinated framework, providing clear direction.

Serving as a practical roadmap for policy reform, infrastructure investment, and sustainable growth, the Plan underscores the need for a nationally aligned approach through the development of a National Cruise Tourism Strategy.

Last week, I presented the Plan to leaders from at the Austrade Visitor Economy Forum in Canberra.

The level of engagement was strong, with productive discussions held with Minister Farrell and Minister King's offices.

These conversations reinforced the importance of a coordinated national approach that supports investment, strengthens regional dispersal and ensures cruise continues to deliver meaningful economic outcomes for communities across the country.

Back on the water, I joined in celebrating *Anthem of the Seas'* debut visit to Hobart, including a plaque and key exchange with Tasmanian Tourism Minister Jane Howlett MP.

A sustainability tour showcasing Royal Caribbean's Destination Net Zero initiatives served as a timely reminder that the industry is focused on delivering growth responsibly.

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