

Cruise calendar

Get a date in your diary for this year's biggest cruise news, writes Jane Archer

There are some things you can rely upon. The sun will rise every day, tulips will always brighten the Dutch landscape come spring and the cruise industry will wow us each year with a host of new ships offering incredible features and exciting itineraries heading to amazing places around the world.

This year is no exception, with more than a dozen ships on the way, boasting speedy go-karts, fairytale restaurants, underwater lounges and cabins with infinity balconies. Fancy a cruise to the South Pole, to admire Canada's fall foliage or to travel around Australia? All that and more is on its way over the next 12 months.

And that's just the ocean-going ships. River cruise lines are launching vessels with swimming pools, swanky suites and new places to eat across Europe, Asia and the US (see p59 for a rundown of the new river ships).

Our calendar will help you keep abreast of the exciting new things in store for your clients. Prices listed are cruise-only unless stated otherwise and other inclusions might apply. Contact the cruise lines directly for more information.

▶ JANUARY

What? APT is treating passengers cruising the Mekong to a complimentary degustation dinner at Vietnam House, a restaurant run by Vietnamese celebrity chef and APT ambassador Luke Nguyen.
Sample price: A 15-day Vietnam and Cambodia Highlights cruise from Siem Reap to Ho Chi Minh City, departing March 15, starts at £4,290, including flights.

▶ FEBRUARY

What? Myanmar-based Strand Cruise has lined up a variety of themed river cruises. Clients will have to be quick to join the classical music itinerary departing in February, but there's food and photography in March and September.
Sample price: From \$1,875 for a four-night photography-themed cruise from Bagan to Mandalay, departing March 26.

▶ MARCH

What? There's no excuse for getting out of shape on AmaWaterways river cruises, as starting this month, wellness instructors will be holding free keep-fit workouts every morning

and afternoon on six vessels.
Sample price: From £1,778 for a seven-night Captivating Rhine cruise from Amsterdam to Basel on *AmaPrima*, departing March 24.

What? Disney Cruise Line's *Disney Magic* comes out of a refurb on March 9 with a new teen club, a coffee corner for adults and Rapunzel's Royal Table, a restaurant modelled on the film *Tangled*. It is cruising in Europe from May to September.
Sample price: From £2,999 for a seven-night Mediterranean cruise round-trip from Barcelona, departing May 26.

What? A Mexican diner, seafood restaurant and two-level family suite with a slide between the floors feature on the world's biggest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean International's *Symphony of the Seas*.
Sample price: From £700 for a five-night, pre-opening round-trip from Barcelona, departing March 31.

▶ APRIL

What? *Carnival Horizon* debuts with the first teppanyaki dining on a Carnival Cruise Line ship, →



PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK



LEFT: APT ambassador Luke Nguyen

RIGHT: Strand Cruise

BELOW: Norwegian Bliss



→ a barbecue smokehouse and a Dr Seuss-themed water park with Cat's Hat and Fun Things flumes. After a few weeks in Europe, the vessel will sail to New York on May 9, from where it will operate a season of Bermuda and Caribbean cruises.

Sample price: The 13-day inaugural cruise round-trip from Barcelona, departing April 2, starts at £1,399, including flights.

What? Clia is holding its first Asia River Cruise & Destination Forum in Ho Chi Minh City on April 10-11. After the business sessions, agents will enjoy a three-night cruise on the Mekong.

Sample price: £100 plus VAT.

What? U by Uniworld, a new river cruise line for 21 to 45-year-olds, sets sail with two vessels operating on the Rhine, Main and Danube, and the Seine. There'll be silent discos, mixologists and painting classes.

Sample price: From £1,122, based on sharing a triple room on a seven-night Seine Experience round-trip from Paris, departing April 14.

What? Norwegian Cruise Line is adding some va-va-vroom to Alaska with new ship *Norwegian Bliss*. The vessel, which is visiting Southampton on April 21 before heading to Seattle, has a top-deck go-kart race track and will be showing the musical *Jersey Boys*.

Sample price: From £1,469 for a seven-night Alaska Highlights cruise round-trip from Seattle, departing June 2.

► MAY

What? Princess Cruises' *Sapphire Princess* arrives in Southampton for the summer season. Clients can enjoy steaks in the Crown Grill and movies under the stars on voyages to the Med and Canary Islands.

Sample price: From £1,009 for a 14-day Mediterranean Adventure cruise round-trip from Southampton, departing May 12.

What? Marella Cruises takes delivery of 1,924-passenger *Marella Explorer* (currently sailing as Tui Cruises' *Mein Schiff 1*) after a refit that adds a swanky Champneys spa and food favourites Kora La and the Snack Shack.

Sample price: From £1,126 for a one-week maiden Cosmopolitan Classics cruise round-trip from Palma, departing May 19, including flights.

What? Clia's cruise conference opens in Southampton on May 23. The three-day event includes talks, a workshop and tours of Princess Cruises' *Royal Princess* and Oceania Cruises' *Marina*. Agents can opt to stay an extra day and tour Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Silhouette*.

Sample price: £110 plus VAT for Clia members only. The event was almost full as *Travel Weekly* went to press, but a waiting list has been set up.

What? A Thomas Keller grill



PICTURES: NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE; THANAPORN LABOUP



LEFT:
*Sapphire
Princess*

RIGHT:
*Scenic
Eclipse*

BELOW:
*Roald
Amundsen*



→ restaurant and exclusive cabanas are highlights on Seabourn's new 600-passenger *Seabourn Ovation*. The ship is spending its maiden season sailing the Baltic and in the Norwegian fjords. **Sample price:** From €6,499 for a 14-night Vintage Europe cruise from Lisbon to Ijmuiden (Amsterdam), departing May 26.

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Roald Amundsen will be the world's first hybrid ship, capable of running on traditional fuel and electric

► JUNE

What? *MSC Seaview*, the second of MSC Cruises' Seaside-class ships, will be christened in Civitavecchia on June 2. It will feature a promenade deck lined with bars, restaurants and shops. **Sample price:** From £429 for a five-day cruise from Civitavecchia to Barcelona, departing June 4.

What? Former diplomat Sir Tony Brenton will be talking about his life as British ambassador to the Russian Federation

between 2004 and 2008 on a Volga Dream river cruise on sale through UK general sales agent Fred River Cruises.

Sample price: A 12-night cruise from St Petersburg to Moscow, departing June 12, starts at £2,995.

What? *Le Laperouse* will be the first of two expedition ships Ponant is launching this year. It will feature a lounge below the water line and a hydraulic platform for easier access to

Zodiacs. Sister ship *Le Champlain* enters service in September.

Sample price: From €4,610 for the seven-night inaugural Icelandic Mosaic cruise round-trip from Reykjavik, departing June 19.

What? Voyages to Antiquity will be dipping into history, culture, castles and geology when it launches cruises to Norway.

Sample price: From £2,795 per person for a 15-day Norwegian Fjords cruise round-trip from Tilbury, departing June 23.

► JULY

What? Viking Cruises is launching its fifth ship, the 930-passenger *Viking Orion*. The vessel features all-balcony cabins and suites, an infinity pool, cookery school and snow room in which real flakes fall each night.

Sample price: From £2,490, including flights, for an eight-day

Iconic Western Mediterranean cruise from Civitavecchia to Barcelona, departing July 8.

What? Hurtigruten is launching *Roald Amundsen*, the world's first hybrid ship, capable of running on traditional fuel as well as electric. Its inaugural sailings will be in Antarctica next winter.

Sample price: From £8,017 for an 18-day Antarctica and Falkland Islands cruise round-trip from the Chilean capital of Santiago, departing November 25.

► AUGUST

What? Scenic is launching its first ocean-going vessel. *Scenic Eclipse* will have all-balcony suites, eight places to eat, butlers for all, a sumptuous spa and offer adventurous voyages with all excursions included in the price.

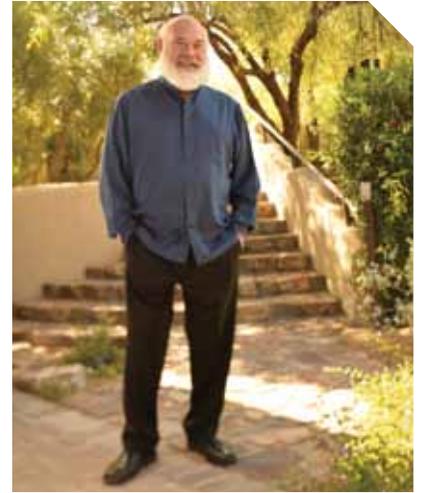
Sample price: From £3,495, including flights, for an 11-day →





LEFT: Star Clippers' yoga-themed cruise

RIGHT: Wellness expert Dr Andrew Weil



➔ cruise from Guayaquil in Ecuador, departing November 14.

What? CroisiEurope is launching cruises on the St Lawrence River and Great Lakes on the 68-passenger *Jacques Cartier*. Clients will visit Montreal, Ottawa and Niagara Falls, and spend a day sailing the Thousand Islands. **Sample price:** From £2,746 for a nine-night Mighty St Lawrence cruise from Quebec to Toronto, departing August 3.

What? Azamara Club Cruises is offering its first no-fly voyage

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The Magic Carpet is either a speciality restaurant or landing platform, depending on where it is hovering

from the UK. It's on *Azamara Pursuit*, the former P&O Cruises ship that joins the fleet in August after a refit to bring the decor in line with Azamara's other vessels.

Sample price: From £5,559 for a 15-night Wonders of Iceland round-trip from Southampton, departing August 13.

▶ SEPTEMBER

What? Clients can learn to meditate on Star Clippers' yoga-themed cruise with expert Helen Noviello. Classes are complimentary and open to beginners and experts.

Sample price: A one-week cruise from Civitavecchia (for Rome) to Cannes, departing September 15, starts at £2,149, including flights.

What? Autumn foliage beckons as Saga Cruises' *Saga Sapphire* sets sail on a no-fly cruise to Canada with representatives of whale and dolphin conservation charity Orca onboard.

Sample price: From £4,307 for a 28-night Nova Scotia and St Lawrence cruise departing Dover on September 21.

▶ OCTOBER

What? Clients can relax, rejuvenate and learn the art of meditation and yoga when holistic medicine guru Dr Andrew Weil joins a Seabourn sailing in the Mediterranean.

Sample price: From £5,499 for a 14-night Origins of Wellness cruise round-trip from Piraeus, departing October 6.

What? Titan Travel managing director Andy Squirrel will be hosting afternoon tea and a

cocktail reception on a river cruise on *Serenade 1* to celebrate the company's 40th anniversary.

Sample price: From £999 for a five-day Anniversary Cruise from Amsterdam to Mainz, departing October 27.

▶ NOVEMBER

What? The Caribbean is calling for Holland America Line's *Nieuw Statendam*, which is heading to the West Indies for its inaugural season. The ship will feature Blend, where wannabe vintners can mix their own wines, and French brasserie Sel de Mer.

Sample price: From £1,199 for a seven-night eastern Caribbean cruise round-trip from Fort Lauderdale on December 23.

What? Celestyal Cruises is looking to entice more people to Greece in the shoulder months by adding more three and four-day island-hopping mini-cruises – a good option for new-to-cruise clients.

Sample price: From €399 for a three-day Iconic Aegean cruise round-trip from Piraeus, departing November 2 or 9.

What? Marella Cruises' *Marella Discovery* bids au revoir to the Med as it heads east for the line's first winter season in the Middle East and Asia.

Sample price: From £1,395, including flights, for a 14-night Red Sea Voyage from Naples to Muscat in Oman, departing November 15.



LEFT: *Marella Discovery*



➔ DECEMBER

What? Celebrity Cruises is launching *Celebrity Edge*, with villas, a rooftop garden and a Magic Carpet that is either a speciality restaurant or landing platform, depending on where it is hovering.

Sample price: From £1,719 for a balcony cabin on a seven-night Eastern Caribbean cruise round-trip from Fort Lauderdale, departing December 16.

What? Voyages to Antiquity is heading back to Asia for winter after a break of several years. Clients can choose from cruise-and-stay itineraries of a month or more and a 129-day Grand Odyssey sailing from Europe to Singapore and back via South Africa.

Sample price: From £6,295 for a 37-day holiday departing December 6 that pairs a cruise from Piraeus to Mumbai with



ABOVE: Magic Carpet, *Celebrity Edge*

three nights in Athens and a tour of the Golden Triangle in India.

What? Regent Seven Seas Cruises is offering its first voyage around Australia on *Seven Seas Mariner*. Passengers will spend Christmas

Day in Papua New Guinea and New Year's Eve in Bali.

Sample price: From £25,079, including flights, for a 36-night Circumnavigation of Australia round-trip from Sydney, departing December 15. TW

River ships to watch in 2018

- ▶ Amadeus River Cruises – *Amadeus Queen*
- ▶ AmaWaterways – *AmaLea*
- ▶ American Cruise Lines – *American Song*
- ▶ Avalon Waterways – *Avalon Saigon*
- ▶ CroisiEurope – *Elbe Princesse II*
- ▶ Crystal Cruises – *Crystal Debussy* and *Crystal Ravel*
- ▶ Pandaw – *Sabei Pandaw*
- ▶ Riviera Travel – *Robert Burns*

For more details on these ships and more river cruise news, check out the digital edition of the latest *Travel Weekly Cruise* at travelweekly.co.uk

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