

YVR and Avolta unveil new Vancouver Duty Free shops



Vancouver International Airport (YVR) has unveiled Vancouver Duty Free, a reimagined shopping experience for international travelers.

The newly renovated Vancouver Duty Free at YVR, which has expanded by 7,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet, spans two walk-through locations post-security in International departures.

The space features a mix of global luxury brands and local British Columbia favorites, creating a unique sense of place and ensuring products for every kind of traveler as they make their way through security screening and onward to their gate.

“We are committed to creating a world-class travel experience that reflects our community and B.C.’s unique culture,” said Tamara Vrooman, President & CEO at YVR.

Vancouver Duty Free is operated by Avolta’s Dufry, and offers several brands at its YVR location that are not available at its other shops, making them exclusive to YVR within Dufry-operated duty free stores. Brands include renowned names such as Charlotte Tilbury, NARS and fragrances by Byredo and Penhaligon via the first Haute Parfumerie.

The new Vancouver Duty Free also offers a tasting bar showcasing Canadian-only whiskies as well as notable products from B.C. wineries and distilleries, Mission Hill and Empress.

The inclusion of local businesses offer travelers authentic Vancouver flavors and elevates their airport retail experience.

“It has been a pleasure to be a partner in YVR’s evolution, and we are proud to unveil Vancouver Duty Free and our first Haute Parfumerie to make a traveler’s journey through YVR as exciting as their ultimate destination,” said Steve Johnson, President & CEO, North America, Avolta. “We have thoughtfully crafted a duty free retail offering that emphasizes local Canadian products, including our private label brand, Explore Canada, alongside internationally recognized brands in the most desired duty free categories.”

In addition to exclusive brands, Vancouver Duty Free at YVR will offer a curated mix of travel essentials, local products, and unique mementos.



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Travelers can also shop ahead and save using Vancouver Duty Free at YVR’s reserve & collect online shopping. Travelers can order online before their trip and save 20 percent off the in-store price. Travelers who opt to shop during their journey can also save through the Club Avolta loyalty program, which offers exclusive offers and cross-promotions.

With a strong focus on local products, exclusive brands, and an elevated shopping experience, Vancouver Duty Free at YVR says that it is setting a new standard for duty free retail.

Carnival signs contracts with 26 Bahamian business owners to operate at Celebration Key

Carnival Corporation has signed the first set of contracts with 26 Bahamian companies that will be operating retail and food and beverage outlets at Celebration Key on Grand Bahama.

Set to open this July, the \$600 million world-class Celebration Key cruise destination will initially bring more than two million guests a year to the island and up to four million by 2028.

In a statement released last week, Carnival says that Bahamians are poised to benefit from a wide variety of economic opportunities, with the majority of businesses being fully Bahamian owned. So far, 26 Bahamian companies have signed contracts to operate at Celebration Key, 18 of which are owned by Grand Bahamians.

Bertrand Piller, Director of Destination Third Party Partnerships and Business Development for Carnival Corporation, commenting on the selection process, noted:

“We’re so thrilled to bring so many talented Bahamian business owners together who will enhance the guest experience at Celebration Key.

“It was a thorough and rewarding exercise, getting to meet so many talented Bahamians showing an interest in partnering with us.

“We wish we could have accommodated more of the proposals submitted, but there are only so many spots,” Piller added.

The contract signings followed a rigorous selection process which included a Request for Proposals (RFP) listed on the Celebration Key website, social media and

other platforms, in order to allow as many Bahamians as possible to apply, pose questions about the application process and receive timely responses.

After the deadline for applications closed, the Carnival Corporation team reviewed and evaluated all proposals based on full completion of the RFP, on-time submission and merit in accordance with the parameters set out in the RFP.

Following this evaluation, the team conducted in-person or digital interviews with the shortlisted candidates to select successful vendor partners and negotiate contract terms.

Among the first wave of signees are entrepreneurs from restaurants including Mini Donut King; Fowl Play Wing Co.; Pineapple House; Bahama Mama Seafood Pit and

Flippin Fritters.

Retail outlets include Bahari; Surfing Turtle; Caribbean Light-house; Sand Dollar Freeport/ Bahamia; Baha Gala; Island Treasures by Sharkeez Freeport; Bahamian Bliss; Del Sol and Cariloha.

In addition to the local vendors, Carnival says that there are numerous potential employment opportunities for Bahamians in tours and shore excursions, transportation, subcontracting services and more.

Overall, the port is expected to generate over approximately 700 permanent local jobs, including approximately 400 Bahamians hired directly by Carnival Corporation.



Lokono Cove is a colorful showcase of Bahamian culture and shopping whose authenticity extends from the name to much of what’s for sale. Among the kiosks, stores and straw market, some highlights in this portal — named for Grand Bahama’s earliest settlers, the peaceful Lucayans — include local artist exhibitions, a mural wall, live music performances... plus artisanal goods made by Bahamian vendors, as well as duty free jewelry and diamond shopping.

Celebration Key is Carnival’s first-ever exclusive destination to be purpose-built for Carnival Cruise Line guests. Located on the south side of the larger island of Grand Bahama, the adjacent cruise pier will be able to accommodate up to two of Carnival’s Excel-class ships simultaneously and capable of welcoming 2 million guests each year. The project was recently increased to allow two additional vessels for a total of four ships that will allow guests to walk off and arrive at Celebration Key.

Celebration Key will offer the largest freshwater lagoons in the Caribbean, a breathtaking mile-long beach, and five unique portals (Paradise Plaza, Calypso Lagoon, Lokono Cove, Starfish Lagoon and Pearl Cove Beach Club) crafted to provide a variety of experiences for guests. These experiences range from family or adult fun, relaxing or adventurous fun, private or social fun, pool or ocean fun, shopping or eating & drinking fun, all with a local Bahamian flavor.

Carnival says that Celebration Key, which opens in summer 2025, is uniquely positioned to bring an island experience to its diverse range of guests.

AmaWaterways launches first luxury river cruise ship on Colombia’s Magdalena River

Luxury river cruise line AmaWaterways has officially launched *AmaMagdalena*, the first-ever luxury river cruise ship to navigate Colombia’s Magdalena



River. The historic launch took place on April 12, 2025, expanding the operator’s portfolio beyond Europe, Asia and Africa, and marks a transformative breakthrough for tourism in the country.

“Our expansion into Colombia represents a new chapter for AmaWaterways and for the world of river cruising,” said Rudi Schreiner, co-founder and CEO of AmaWaterways. “We are proud to be the first major river cruise line to explore the Magdalena River, a region that until now has been largely inaccessible.”

Carrying just 60 guests, *AmaMagdalena* was custom-designed in collaboration with Colombian craftspeople and woodwork specialists. The ship’s creative vision, led by architect and interior designer Camilo Restrepo, was inspired by the region’s natural beauty to offer an intimate, upscale experience. The interiors of the staterooms, which range from 237 to 516 square feet, were built by Marianna Schlegel Donado of Casa Schlegel Donado from Barranquilla and feature AmaWaterways’ signature twin-balcony design. Cartagena-based Ocean Projects brought their expert craftsmanship to river cruising, handcrafting the ship’s woodwork.

The two immersive seven-night itineraries, *Magic of Colombia* and *Wonders of Colombia*, sail between Cartagena and Barranquilla and include unique cultural highlights. Optional pre- and post-cruise land packages are available in Medellín, Cartagena and Panama City.

AmaWaterways will launch *AmaMelodia*, its second ship on the Magdalena River, later this year.

Miami Dade approves \$330 Million investment to transform MIA concessions



The \$330 million investment program approved by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners in April will be used to overhaul and upgrade Miami International Airport's Food & Beverage and Retail concessions.

Seattle's 2025 cruise season kicks off with all cruise berths shore power-enabled

Seattle's 2025 cruise season kicked off on Saturday, April 12, at the Port of Seattle's Bell Street Pier Cruise Terminal at Pier 66 with the arrival of Norwegian Bliss marking the first sailing of the Seattle-to-Alaska season.

This is the first full season with all three of Seattle's cruise berths having [shore power](#), allowing cruise vessels to shut off their engines while at berth. Seattle is one of the only home ports that has all of its cruise berths shore power-enabled and can have three ships plugged into shore power simultaneously.

The 2025 season runs from April to October. The season is expected to support 298 sailings; 1.9 million revenue passengers, which comes out to more than 900,000 unique passengers; nearly \$900 million in economic impact including tourism, provisioning, and jobs supported by cruise; and 5,500 jobs

"The 2025 cruise season marks a major milestone as the first full season of clean energy shore power available at all three berths making

our home port an international leader in shoreside decarbonization," said Port of Seattle Executive Director Steve Metruck

Additionally, Carnival Corporation will conduct a biofuel pilot in the region to study future tools to further reduce carbon emissions. Metruck says that alternative sustainable fuels are a critical element in the maritime industry's decarbonization strategy.

Three new lines to homeport at Seattle over next two seasons

This June, Cunard Line's *Queen Elizabeth* will spend its first home port season in Seattle. The vessel will offer eleven sailings this season, with 7- to 11-day itineraries from June to September.

In 2026, Seattle will also welcome Virgin Voyages and MSC Cruises for their first home port Alaska seasons.

Cruise lines operating in Seattle follow the Port's best practices along with state and international regulatory guidelines while also voluntarily adapting operations and equipment to protect air and water.

The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a landmark investment package to overhaul concessions at Miami International Airport (MIA) earlier this month.

The legislation secures a minimum guaranteed investment of \$267 million, with an additional \$64.5 million contingent on a lease extension—bringing the total potential investment to over \$330 million.

The proposal was sponsored by Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, Vice Chair of the Airport Committee, who, calling it "a transformative milestone for MIA," says that the investment will secure MIA's "status as the Gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean."

"This historic agreement modernizes MIA's concessions, expands dining and retail options, and secures long-term revenue for our community. Just as importantly, it opens doors for new businesses, giving local entrepreneurs a real opportunity to grow and succeed at one of the busiest airports in the world," said Cohen Higgins in a statement.

Among the changes will be a shift to 63% food and beverage (F&B) and 37% retail.

The key provisions of the agreement also call for expanded opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses, ensuring greater participation in concession contracts and supporting local entrepreneurs, and a minimum investment of \$850

per square foot for retail spaces and \$1,000 per square foot for F&B spaces—nearly double current industry standards.

The modernization plan also calls for cutting-edge technology, including mobile ordering, AI-powered inventory systems, and multi-order point-of-sale options as well as strict enforcement of renovation deadlines and accountability from concessionaires.

Additionally, Commissioner Cohen Higgins is spearheading new Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for concessionaire opportunities in the upcoming Terminal K, as well as released spaces in the North Terminal and other high-traffic areas, with the goal to broaden vendor diversity and enhance MIA's offerings with innovative, world-class brands.

This modernization plan is expected to generate approximately \$1 billion in revenue over the 12-year term, reinforcing MIA's role as an economic powerhouse for Miami-Dade County.

Additionally, the agreement ensures compliance with the county's Living Wage ordinance, guaranteeing wages of at least \$21.67 per hour, more than 60% above the state's minimum wage.

"With record-breaking growth—56 million passengers and over 3 million tons of cargo in 2024—MIA is at a pivotal moment. To stay competitive on the global stage, we must act decisively," said Cohen Higgins.



Port of Seattle

Starboard enhances presence in German market by expanding partnership with the Mein Schiff fleet

Starboard Group has expanded its partnership with TUI Cruises, launching a highly curated retail assortment aboard a second ship in the German Mein Schiff fleet, *Mein Schiff Relax*, a new class of ship which was named last week and will be sailing in Europe as of April.

“After launching our partnership just last year, we’re extremely proud to now cement our relationship with TUI Cruises and debut expertly curated retail experiences on a second ship, *Mein Schiff Relax*,” said Lisa Bauer, Starboard’s President and CEO. “The expansion of our partnership so quickly after its initial launch is a testament to the trust Starboard has built with TUI and our ability to deliver premium assortments and unforgettable retail experiences that specifically resonate with German travelers and elevate their cruise experience.”

Curated retail offerings for German guests

Mein Schiff Relax’s Starboard Shops span 3,970 square feet of retail space and feature beauty, fine jewelry, watches, fashion and more from renowned global and German brands. The Mediterranean destination shop is a key pillar of the retail experience, offering curated assortments of food, apparel, fashion accessories, jewelry and souvenirs for adults and kids that celebrate the destinations along the ship’s various routes. The cruise guests also have the opportunity to book private shopping appointments onboard.

The Starboard Shops feature a range of women’s fashion and accessories from Karl Lagerfeld, Armani Exchange, Polo Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein. Jewelry offerings from Danish brand Pandora include the brand’s signature assortment of charm bracelets and pendants.



TUI Cruises GmbH, a joint venture company made up of TUI AG and the US cruise company Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., has a fleet of seven ships for the Mein Schiff brand, plus five ships under the Hapag-Lloyd Cruises brand. The brand new Mein Schiff Relax was christened on April 9, 2025, in the port of Málaga.

The shops also feature curated assortments of men’s and women’s watches from BERING, Bulova, Citizen and Hugo Boss and smart sunglasses from the new Ray-Ban Meta AI collection. Beauty offerings include selections from Rituals Cosmetics, Sol de Janeiro,

Shiseido and L’Occitane and fragrances from Bulgari, Chanel, Dior and Tom Ford.

Starboard has also introduced collections of men’s casual classics fashion from Fynch-Hatton, and handbags and accessories for men and women from Italian luxury brand Gianni Chiarini.

Building on TUI’s commitment to sustainability and the strong environmental values of German consumers, Starboard is offering an expanded assortment of environmentally friendly brands and products in its retail initiatives on *Mein Schiff Relax*.

These include lab-created diamonds from Engrace Diamonds and vintage luxury accessories and handbags from What Goes Around Comes Around.

San Juan Cruise Port highlights \$42m in infrastructure improvements during Seatrade Cruise Global

San Juan Cruise Port (SJCP), operated by Global Ports Holding (GPH), hosted a special press conference for key stakeholders during Seatrade Cruise Global 2025 in Miami, to talk about key investments in operational and infrastructure needs. SJCP was also featured prominently at the GPH booth.

Performance on the rise

SJCP reported increases in both cruise line activity and passenger volume. Early 2025 figures show a 10% increase in passenger traffic, with 2025 projections indicating further growth of nearly 20%. This growth reflects the port’s strengthened partnerships with cruise operators, improved operational capacity, and a renewed focus on San Juan as a key embarkation point in the Caribbean.

Infrastructure projects progressing on schedule

The Port officials also reported that Phase 1 of the Panamerican Piers modernization project, in which \$42m has been invested as of last month, is nearly completed. This phase represents a significant step in SJCP’s broader infrastructure plan, aimed at elevating safety standards, improving operational efficiency, and preparing the port to receive the newest generation of cruise vessels.

In addition to the Panamerican upgrades, repair work at Pier 3 is progressing steadily. Replacement of the mooring dolphin on the west side of the Pier is underway, as part of the strategy to strengthen maritime infrastructure and ensure full compliance with evolving technical requirements by regulatory authorities.

Public-Private partnership driving success

The port’s progress reflects the strength of its collaboration with public and private stakeholders, said **Mehmet Kutman, Chairman and CEO of Global Ports Holding**, in a presentation with Clarisa Jiménez, President & CEO of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association (PRHTA) and Crystal Bell, Director of Air and Cruise Access, Puerto Rico Tourism Company.

Strategic vision for the future

With major infrastructure milestones on track and projected passenger volume increase, SJCP is positioned for long-term growth. Upcoming phases of development will further expand capacity and support the arrival of larger, next-generation cruise ships.

About San Juan Cruise Port

In 2022, San Juan Cruise Port and its parent company, Global Ports Holding, were selected by the Government of Puerto Rico to repair, rebuild, maintain and operate the San Juan cruise ports under a 30-year Public-Private Partnership Agreement with the Puerto Rico Ports Authority (PRPA). A \$425 million investment in the SJCP will enhance and expand the facility into one of the premier cruise ports in the world.

Kasper Andersen appointed Managing Director of Edrington Global Travel Retail, succeeding Jeremy Speirs



Kasper Andersen is the new Managing Director for Edrington Global Travel Retail

Edrington has announced the appointment of Kasper Andersen as the new Managing Director for Edrington Global Travel Retail. Andersen will succeed Jeremy Speirs, who will transition to a new role as Regional Managing Director, Edrington Americas with effect from June 2025.

Over the course of a career with Edrington spanning nearly twenty years, Andersen has played a key role in driving growth across the EMEA region, holding several leadership positions in North and Central Europe and most recently heading up the Nordics business and overseeing Germany.

In 2015, he established Edrington European Travel Retail and had overall responsibility for the EMEA region during a three-year tenure as Commercial Director, EMEA Travel Retail.

Andersen will be based in Edrington's Glasgow headquarters.

Jeremy Speirs

Under the leadership of **Jeremy Speirs**, Edrington GTR strengthened The Macallan's position as the leading single malt by value in the channel through a focus on premiumization.

In his new role, based in New York, Speirs will lead and oversee the day to day running of Edrington's largest single market, the USA, as well as the wider Americas business, switching channels to focus on the domestic side of the business.

Igor Boyadjian, Managing Director, The Macallan: "Travel retail remains a key strategic channel for our business, continuing to play a central role as a platform for brand-building and recruitment. Jeremy's tenure at

the helm of the Global Travel Retail business has been hugely impactful, with notable successes including the global rollout of The Macallan Colour Collection as well as the continued sharpening of our experiential retail strategy. Kasper is a natural successor to Jeremy; his experience in this channel along with his deep understanding of Edrington's brands, will ensure a seamless transition and continuity in the execution of our premiumization strategy."

Kasper Andersen, Managing Director, Edrington Nordics & Germany: "I leave the Nordics with a strong sense of achievement and pride in what we achieved together as a team, and I now look forward to returning to Travel Retail. I really enjoy working in this strategic channel, which offers a unique opportunity to showcase our brands and offer the consumer an experience out of the ordinary. I also look forward to meeting former retail partners as well as building relationships with new ones to power future collaborations in this dynamic channel."

Jeremy Speirs, Regional Managing Director, Edrington Global Travel Retail: "I'm immensely proud of what our business and talented and ambitious team has achieved over the last five years, initially during a period of recalibration and recovery, and more recently delivering some milestone launches and innovations, but always underpinned by our unwavering belief in travel retail and the long-term prospects it offers for premiumization. I wish Kasper all the best in his new role and am looking forward to seeing our business in travel retail go from strength to strength."



The Balvenie pop-up at Changi Airport

WGS launches GTR exclusive The Balvenie 12 YO Golden Cask with a series of high profile activations

William Grant & Sons is featuring GTR exclusive The Balvenie 12-Year-Old Golden Cask, the newest addition to The Balvenie's Cask Finishes Range, in a series of high-profile activations for 2025 in key locations.

The campaign launched in Seoul Incheon, Hong Kong, Taipei Taoyuan, London Heathrow, Shanghai Pudong, Beijing Capital, Istanbul, Mumbai, Delhi, and Dubai airports, and will be rolled out across the coming months in Singapore Changi, London Gatwick, Paris Charles de Gaulle, and Los Angeles airports.

Created to highlight the brand's expertise, each location-tailored experience invites adult travelers to embark on an immersive sensory journey that explores The Balvenie distillery's signature approach to crafted whisky making with a curated selection of The Balvenie's portfolio of whiskies, led by the Cask Finishes range.

A focal point of the campaign is a pop-up designed in collaboration with Lotte Duty Free, live at Singapore Changi airport from March 28th to April 22nd.

"We are excited to partner with our long-term customers on this new series of activations, presenting The Balvenie's Cask Finishes range and the newest 12 YO addition to travelers globally in an interactive and personalized way," commented Gwilym Cooke, Head of Marketing GTR at William Grant & Sons.

The Balvenie 12 Year Old Golden Cask

The Balvenie 12 Year Old Golden Cask is a whisky finished in rum-seasoned casks that began its journey with 12 years of maturation in traditional ex-bourbon whisky casks, developing the signature Balvenie style with notes of warm honey and smooth vanilla. It is bottled at 43% ABV.

The Balvenie 12 Year Old Golden Cask joins The Balvenie 15 Year Old Madeira Cask and The Balvenie 18 Year Old Pedro Ximénez Sherry Cask as Global Travel Retail Exclusives, alongside The Balvenie 21 Year Old Portwood Cask.