



Cruise Weekly today

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

We are Geelong!

GEELONG Travel has signed on as an official partner of the Geelong Cats, with the team's season ticket holders having the chance to win a Princess Cruises two-night Sydney to Melbourne sailing aboard *Diamond Princess*.

The prize will be offered at every Cats home game at GMHBA Stadium next year.

The partnership will also see those who purchase a 2024 Geelong Cats season ticket by 22 Dec go into the draw to win a \$1,000 travel voucher thanks to Geelong Travel.

The agency's Managing Director Stuart Coffield is known for frequently featuring Cats players in his ads.

WA expedition flourishing

EXCLUSIVE

WESTERN Australia's strategy of attracting greater numbers of 'high-value' travellers to the state is being spurred on significantly by a strong growth in luxury expedition cruises over the last 12 months, Tourism WA Managing Director Carolyn Turnbull has revealed.

Speaking with **Cruise Weekly** this week, Turnbull said the "strong interest" WA has been receiving from premium expedition brands is due mainly to a growing appetite from cruise pax for expedition experiences and itineraries they can't get anywhere else in the world.

"Smaller vessels with higher-end experiences, smaller room counts of 40 to 50 keys, all show that the high net worth individual is looking for extraordinary experiences...and the Kimberley definitely provides that," she said.

Turnbull also pointed out WA's cruise sector is benefitting from a lack of ultra-luxury hotel accommodation in rural Australia.

"This makes the cruise segment so important because you've essentially got floating hotels, and you either can be on a large floating hotel or a smaller, more bespoke floating hotel, and I think the landscape in WA speaks for itself and the cruise sector in the state will continue to thrive for years," Turnbull predicted.

While most cruisers think of the Kimberley when they think of WA sailings, Turnbull was keen to underscore the importance of alternative cruise opportunities in WA as well, namely the stretch between growing tourist hubs such as Margaret River, Albany and further afield to Esperance, as it looks to double its volume of cruise lines in its waters over the next 10 years. *AB*



On location on board *Resilient Lady*

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you from Virgin Voyages' *Resilient Lady*, has departed Sydney for its Aussie preview sailing to Melbourne.

WITH a ship full of agents experiencing all that is on offer on board, guests partied into the night, awaking to a sunny morning - and maybe some needing a little bit more sleep.

Plenty of fitness options are available, including The Runway running track around the ship, and for those looking for a bit of pampering, the spa is calling.

We're not sure how many takers are in for the onboard Squid Ink tattoo parlour... maybe someone can make an impression in the office Mon.

UP TO 75% OFF 2ND GUEST*

+

BONUS SAVINGS ON SELECT DATES*

CELEBRITY EDGE ARRIVES IN 1 DAY



Sail Croatia interest is booming

SMALL ship special interest cruises are expected to boom next year, according to Sail Croatia, as it is set to introduce two new itineraries in 2024.

Sail Croatia saw unprecedented growth across its program this year, with Hike cruises recording a 77% increase, Navigator party cruises up 68%, and Cycle cruises going north by 30%.

The cruise line also witnessed a 58% surge in bookings for its Private Yacht Tour experiences, which caters to small groups seeking a skippered island-hopping adventure.

Sail Croatia is now introducing a Wines of Croatia itinerary, which will immerse guests in the burgeoning wine production of the Adriatic; and a Yoga cruise, which caters to those seeking a holistic wellness experience.

The Wines of Croatia cruise has thus far proved to be its



most successful product ever, Managing Director and co-owner Grant Seuren said, with the line adding extra capacity due to demand just a matter of days after its launch.

"We are seeing no slow down in demand for these products," he said.

"Croatia's standing as a top destination continues to attract a multitude of tourists eager to explore the breathtaking Adriatic.

"Special interest cruises are particularly popular, demonstrating that people want

to learn or indulge in a hobby while they are away."

Substantial investment in fleet expansion is a pivotal aspect of Sail Croatia's strategy, particularly as bookings for a private charter continue to flow.

The cruise line is adding three yachts next year, following on from the three it added in 2023, with those joining the fleet including the 55-foot *Slice of Heaven*, the 53-foot *Morpheus*, and the 36-berth *Katarina*.

The new trio will expand Sail Croatia's fleet to 27 ships. *MS*

MSC updates

MSC Cruises has updated its northern summer 2024 program, with an entirely new program for *MSC Musica* in the western Mediterranean, and an enhanced Greek islands itinerary for *MSC Opera*.

Musica will now offer seven-night round trip sailings out of Civitavecchia to guest-favourite destinations in the western Mediterranean, including Genoa, Cannes, Barcelona, Ibiza, and Cagliari. This new program has replaced cancelled sailings which included Haifa, due to the Israel-Hamas war.

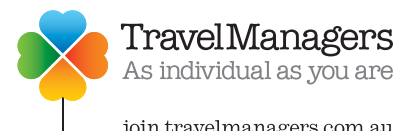
Meanwhile, *Opera's* existing seven-night sailings between 12 May 2024 and 05 Oct 2024 have been enhanced with additional Greek Island destinations, including Bari, Piraeus, Santorini, Katakolon, Corfu, and Kefalonia.

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A GROUP of student engineering whizzes are readying their SP80 boat (pictured) for a tilt at the world sailing speed record next year.

The 50-strong Swiss team from EPFL are aiming to use a boat with a kite attachment to smash the existing record of 65.45 knots (121.21km/h).

The team is aiming to achieve an incredible speed of 80 knots (150 km/h) when they take to the waves off Plage du Rouet.

The boat is 10 metres long, and has an incredibly sleek design with superventilating hydrofoils, and parts that have never been created before.



Cunard records

CUNARD Line secured a record number of Black Fri period bookings this year.

The cruise line saw strong booking momentum across 2024 and 2025 sailings, with *Queen Anne's* European itineraries proving to be popular with guests.

The record bolsters Cunard's strongest-ever start to the year, off the back of its sturdiest wave campaign in around a decade.

Aranui expands offering



ARANUI Cruises is expanding its cargo cruising to more of French Polynesia in 2025.

The season will see Aranui make its first-ever freight delivery to French Polynesia's Austral Islands, after 40 years of sailing solely in the Marquesas Islands.

Aranui 5 (pictured) will offer 22 voyages in her 2025 schedule, all carrying cargo to either the northern Marquesas Islands or southern Austral Islands.

The three 13-day Australs voyages will see *Aranui 5* deliver freight to the remote southern islands for the first time, while also collecting goods to deliver to Raiatea, Bora Bora and Papeete on the return leg.

The cruise line's southern voyages are the only way to see all five inhabited Austral Islands - Tubuai, Rurutu, Rimatara, Raivavae, and Rapa Iti, which is only accessible by sea.

Aranui 5 the only local ship permitted to visit.

Earlybird discounts are available until 29 Feb 2024, including 15% off the Austral Islands voyages,

(departing 05 Apr, 06 Sep, and 01 Nov 2025) and 10% off all Marquesas Islands voyages.

"Aranui offers one of the few remaining cargo cruise experiences in the world and we know how much our guests enjoy this unique way of travelling, so we're thrilled to expand cargo cruising to a new corner of French Polynesia," said Regional Representative Laurent Wong.

"When we first started offering cargo cruising to the Marquesas 40 years ago, hardly anyone had heard of French Polynesia's northern archipelago, but we have watched on proudly as Aranui became an integral part of the island communities and helped create a sustainable flow of tourism in an isolated part of the world.

"We hope to put the Australs on the map in a similar fashion, working with the remote southern communities to develop their economy and tourism in a slow, sustainable way while also opening up their beautiful islands for a privileged few to see." MS

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	08 Dec
<i>Seabourn Odyssey</i>	08 Dec
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	08 Dec
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	09 Dec
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	10 Dec
<i>Noordam</i>	10 Dec
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	10 Dec

MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	08 Dec
<i>Viking Orion</i>	08 Dec
<i>Resilient Lady</i>	09 Dec
<i>Silver Whisper</i>	10 Dec

PORT ADELAIDE	
<i>Silver Whisper</i>	08 Dec
<i>Crystal Symphony</i>	10 Dec

PENNESHAW	
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	08 Dec
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	10 Dec

BRISBANE	
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	08 Dec
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	09 Dec
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	10 Dec

CAIRNS	
<i>Star Breeze</i>	09 Dec

AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	08 Dec

FREMANTLE	
<i>Regatta</i>	08 Dec

BUSSELTON	
<i>Regatta</i>	10 Dec

HOBART	
<i>Noordam</i>	08 Dec
<i>Viking Orion</i>	10 Dec

AUCKLAND	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	08 Dec

CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	08 Dec

WELLINGTON	
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	08 Dec