



CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Cruise Weekly today

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

Bratton departs

SARINA Bratton's final two-year contract with Ponant has come to an end, bringing a close to the cruise legend's 11-year tenure with the line, as revealed by *Cruise Weekly* on Fri (*CW* breaking news Fri).

Bratton spent more than a decade as Ponant Chair, after which she moved into the role of advisor to the CEO.

She played a crucial role in developing Ponant's strategic plan for Australia when she opened the cruise line's local office, recruiting staff and launching operations in Sydney in Feb 2014 (*CW* 26 Nov 2013).

Ponant local head Deb Corbett paid tribute to Bratton's leadership.

A Quantum leap for Qld

ROYAL Caribbean's *Quantum of the Seas* returned to Brisbane yesterday (pictured) for her third season home porting in the capital of Queensland.

Quantum's return on the first day of summer will see her sail a variety of 22 sun-soaked holidays to the South Pacific, New Zealand, and the coast of Queensland.

Highlights of the season include island-hopping on 11 seven- to eight-night holidays to the South Pacific, visiting the turquoise waters of Mystery Island, Port Vila, and Noumea.

Travellers can also choose a 14-night cruise to New Zealand, taking in the Bay of Islands, Tauranga, Napier, and Wellington.

Quantum is also offering five four- to six-night Queensland getaways, perfect for snorkelling at the Great Barrier Reef and enjoying fresh seafood at Airlie Beach and Cairns.



"More Queensland families are choosing *Quantum of the Seas* for their next holiday, seamlessly combining spectacular destinations with the ease of an all-encompassing adventure," Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith said.

"On *Quantum*, families can make their getaway truly their own with options to delight everyone," he added.

Royal Caribbean's *Anthem of the Seas* also recently arrived in Singapore for her first-ever Asian cruises (*CW* 22 Nov).

Anthem will offer 30 cruises to choose from, with visits to some of Asia's top destinations. *MS*



On location in Dresden

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, aboard *Viking Astrild* as part of a 'Christmas Along the Elbe' itinerary in Europe.

THE collapse of a bridge in Dresden a couple of months ago has severely disrupted river traffic on the Elbe, but Viking has risen to the occasion, orchestrating a full "ship swap" to an identical sister vessel.

The seamless changeover took place while guests were ashore in Dresden on a full day program of museum visits, a traditional lunch and plenty of Christmas Market cheer.

Now aboard *Viking Astrild*, our trip brings us to Meissen, the home of German porcelain.

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Fiji targeting cruise growth through to 2027

FIJI is planning to work with cruise lines, particularly the expedition sector, to expand the reasons to travel to the country.

The recently released *Tourism Fiji Corporate Plan 2024-2027*, targets expedition lines as key business the destination hopes to attract over the next few years.

“Expanding our cruise offerings, including shore excursions for passengers, is a top priority,” the report noted.

“Expedition cruise line guests are typically brand-loyal, high-value travellers seeking unique and authentic experiences.

“This market aligns well with Fiji’s brand, which targets high-yield travellers through marketing that highlights our brand pillars.”

The report also called attention to the expedition sector’s ability to facilitate tourism dispersal to less-visited regions, with a lower environmental impact.



The destination marketing organisation’s priorities will now shift to ensuring the country’s operating climate is right for cruise, with the report identifying plans to work in partnership with the cruise sector and relevant government agencies to promote opportunities for investment.

This will include the long-term objective to develop home porting in Fiji, and focus on repeat visitation.

“We will focus on partnering with sustainable cruise lines, enhancing links with [SMEs], diversifying experiences, and positioning Fiji as a home port for cruise ships and yachts to benefit the local economy and improve maritime infrastructure.”

The destination has spent the past 12 months laying the ground work to achieve its cruise goals, earlier this year hosting the Fiji Cruise Symposium. *MS*

Celestyal launches

CELESTYAL Cruises’ inaugural Arabian Gulf season has launched in Qatar (*CW* 15 Nov), with *Celestyal Journey* having arrived in Doha.

The season begins with two specially themed F1 voyages, which will take during the Qatar and Abu Dhabi grand prix events (*CW* 11 Nov).

Celestyal marked the maiden arrival with a day event, in partnership with Visit Qatar, Qatar Tourism, Qatar Airways and Mwan Port Authority.

Local dignitaries were joined by media and influencers on board *Journey* while she was docked on 30 Nov for a series of presentations, a ship tour, the traditional plaque exchange ceremony, and a celebratory lunch.

Celestyal is also hosting six Australian travel advisors on the inaugural cruise.

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HX HAS set what it believes to be a new record, with *Roald Amundsen* achieving 1,416 wildlife observations during a recent 14-day voyage from Panama to Chile.

The sightings were logged on iNaturalist, a free online community that helps people identify plants and animals while generating data for science and conservation.

The expedition last month encountered an impressive variety of wildlife, including many different types of birds, such as toucans, northern giant petrel and great-tailed grackle.

Passengers also spotted dolphins, swordfish, crabs, humpback whales, capybaras, turtles, sloths, and several different plant species, including Lady of the Night Orchid, Eve's Needle Cactus, and Sea Hibiscus.

Queen of the Caribs

PRINCESS Cruises' *Caribbean Princess* has arrived in Port Canaveral for her first-ever season of sailing from the Floridian facility.

The ship will cruise to the beaches of the Caribbean through Apr, on a season of 19 sailings ranging up to eight days in length.

The vessel's first cruise was a four-day Thanksgiving voyage to the Turks & Caicos.

Ama pops the question



AMAWATERWAYS Regional Sales Manager Christine Oliver recently hosted a famil on the Danube for Australian travel advisors and their partners.

Attendees included Sarah Smith; Sharon Summerhayes; Angie Reilly; Louise Carroll; Grace Lloyd-Forrest; Nikki Davies; Tammy Cunnington; Sophie Partland; Lisa Zahra; Melissa Goodwin; Michele Horvath; Ashleigh O'Brien; and Tracy Satur and their guests.

Guests sailed from Vilshofen to Budapest on a taster of AmaWaterways 'Christmas Markets Cruise', which visited five different Christmas markets and provided no shortage of gift opportunities for loved ones.

The famil also took place during off-season, with crowd levels down, which made for a much more pleasant experience.

"Travelling in what is traditionally an off-peak season was brilliant, as there were very few crowds [it was] easy to get in and see all attractions, and [there was] that true Christmas feel," Oliver told *Cruise Weekly*.

They also were lucky enough to witness the year's first snow, with Oliver quipping: "there is no such thing as bad weather - just wrong clothing choices."

There was even a marriage proposal aboard the famil - although Oliver was tight-lipped about which two got hitched. *MS*

New Globus portal

GLOBUS family of brands is preparing travel advisors for the launch of its new global portal (*CW* 09 Oct), which will role out later this month.

The launch of the upgraded Travel Advisor Portal (TAP), designed to make booking management easier, will be accompanied by training webinars, which will kick off from Thu - register **HERE**.



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