



Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from Paul Gauguin Cruises.

Sweet Tahiti deal

PAUL Gauguin Cruises is offering complimentary US\$500 shipboard credit per person on Tahiti voyages - see the **back page** for details.

Florida port boost

PORT Tampa Bay in Florida will soon gain a fourth cruise terminal in response to growing demand.

While a timeline has not been confirmed, some city officials said the terminal could be completed in around three years.

Tampa Bay currently serves as the homeport for ships of five cruise lines.

HX Expeditions bolsters ANZ sales team

HX EXPEDITIONS has boosted its presence in Australia and NZ with three new appointments to its regional sales team.

Based in Melbourne, Ben Gorman (pictured left) has been named as a business development manager, bringing extensive experience from roles with The Travel Corporation and Rocky Mountaineer.

Kat Nitarski (pictured middle) has also been hired as a new BDM to support travel agents across Queensland, drawing on 14 years of experience in small group touring.

Meanwhile, Rebecca Bussell (pictured right) has been appointed to the sales coordinator role, and is tasked with backing the ANZ sales team across trade activity, communications and partner engagement.

Based in Sydney, she brings experience from American



Express Premium Travel Services and Rocky Mountaineer.

The trio will work alongside director of sales Amber Wilson and key account manager Gareth Coakley to provide enhanced coverage across the local market.

“The ANZ market continues to be a key growth region for HX, with more travellers seeking immersive, experience-led exploration,” Wilson said.

“Our trade partners are at the heart of everything we do.

“By investing in experienced, locally based team members, we’re making it easier for advisors

to access the tools, knowledge, and support they need to confidently sell expedition travel.”

Wilson added, “As we approach our 130th anniversary, this investment in our ANZ team reflects both our heritage and our future”.

“Strengthening our presence in this region ensures we continue to lead the category while supporting the partners who bring these journeys to life.”

The appointments come just over a year after HX established its dedicated ANZ sales and marketing team. JM



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Princess blocked

PASSENGERS on board Princess Cruises' *Sun Princess* missed out on a scheduled port day in Corsica, France on Tue due to a protest by local fishermen that prevented the ship from docking.

Despite attempts by the ship's captain to negotiate access, *Sun Princess* was forced to continue its journey without calling at Ajaccio, which was being blocked by fishing boats.

The strike, which is in response to rising fuel prices, was carried out across all six of the city's commercial ports, and is expected to continue until the government steps in.

Corsica was a newly added port for *Sun Princess* on its seven-day Western Mediterranean itineraries, replacing Gibraltar on 16 departures through to Oct.

Marina to get makeover



OCEANIA Marina is set to undergo an extensive refurbishment in Oct, Oceania Cruises has announced.

The stem-to-stern transformation will see every stateroom redesigned with new layouts, upgraded furnishings, and fresh bathrooms featuring marble finishes and spacious rainforest showers.

Pubic spaces will also be enhanced, with bars and lounges to receive updated furnishings, new carpeting and refined

lighting, while the Grand Lounge will see the introduction of the Founders Bar, which will offer artisanal cocktails.

Other upgrades will include a new Chef's Studio to replace the former Artist Loft, the addition of a bakery to the coffee house, a refresh of the ship's signature restaurants, and new sun loungers and day beds on the pool deck.

Marina's makeover is the first in a series of enhancements planned as part of the line's OceaniaNEXT program. *JM*

CLIA's new member

TRAVEL Manitoba in central Canada has joined Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) with the aim of supporting the region's growing expedition cruise sector, particularly in Churchill, considered the 'Polar Bear Capital of the World'.

The agency will participate in Cruise360 Australasia in Sep to highlight the appeal of ships visiting the town, including *Scenic Eclipse* and *Atlas Ocean Voyages*, both of which are scheduled to visit the port town in 2027.

"The world's expedition cruise fleet is forecast to grow its capacity by 150% over this decade, which presents huge possibilities for travellers to explore the extraordinary wildlife and landscapes of destinations like Churchill, Manitoba," said CLIA executive director Australasia Joel Katz.



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on the latest cruise news

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TRAVELLERS who are curious about cruising but are not ready to commit to a multi-day journey may be able to get a taste of the cruise ship life, without ever leaving the dock.

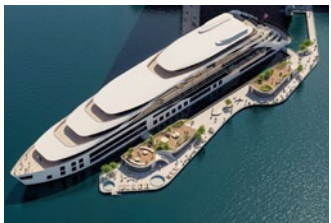
A six-storey, 250-key floating hotel has been proposed by Vancouver Harbour Flight Centre (VHFC) for the Canadian city's Coal Harbour, in a bid to offer a much-needed boost to the region's hotel room supply.

A letter of intent penned by VHFC chairman Graham Clarke said the 'floatel' (render **pictured**) would "operate like a normal building on land, with no discharge to the water".

If approved, the project would include a publicly accessible hotel-bar, shops, a restaurant and a viewing area, as well as one-storey buildings for a cafe and spa.

According to the 2025 development application, the floatel could be operational by 2027 "if approvals are achieved expeditiously".

Due to the "unusual nature" of the project - which has already attracted critics - a public hearing is scheduled to take place next week.



Panache: It's still safe to sail



UK-BASED luxury cruise agency Panache Cruises, which is set to launch in the Australian market next month (**CW** 16 Mar), has released a free guide addressing the impact of the Middle East conflict on the cruise industry.

Earlier this year, the UK cruise specialist announced it will open a local office in May with a team of around eight to 10 sales people, led by Sydney-based Juliana Nasmith, who has worked with Luxury Escapes and Helloworld.

The announcement marks the next phase of expansion for Panache Cruises, which has grown quickly since its launch in 2020, leading it to open its first overseas office in Florida in 2024

Offering clear information to travellers and answering commonly asked questions, the 'Safe to Sail' guide will be sent to more than 200,000 names on the agency's database as well as shared on its website and social media platforms.

Panache Cruises CEO and founder James Cole (**pictured**) said that since the conflict started, the agency has been working closely with cruise lines to help stranded passengers get home.

"Whenever you get major global events like this you get an information vacuum," Cole said. "Nobody knows how long the situation in the Middle East will last so people are anxious about booking holidays.

"We know from the feedback we're getting from customers that people just want to speak to someone and get accurate information, so we felt we had to do more."

Despite the ongoing situation, Panache Cruises has managed to maintain its sales, even seeing increased demand for Mediterranean and Caribbean sailings, European river cruising, expedition voyages, Cole said.

The 'Safe to Sail' guide can be found **HERE**. *JM*

Heritage in style

HERITAGE Expeditions has announced Kiwi fashion designer Karen Walker as a special guest on board its 'Beyond Fiordland: New Zealand's Wildest Islands' cruise in Dec.

Guests joining the 12-day expedition aboard *Heritage Adventurer* will enjoy a fireside chat and Q&A with Walker, whose label has been worn by A-list stars, including Madonna, Adele and more.



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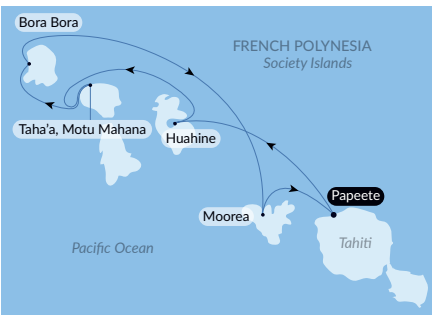
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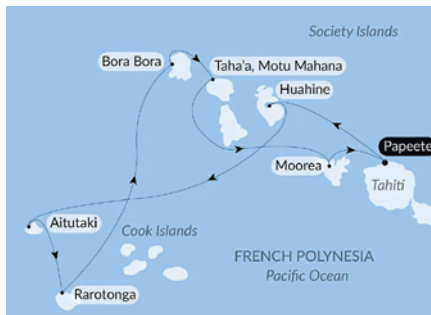
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