

Cruise Weekly today

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



On location on board
AmaSofia

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you courtesy of AmaWaterways, which is hosting us on its Danube-bound mega famil aboard **AmaSofia**.

AMAWATERWAYS' famil guests have boarded the brand-new *AmaSofia* and have arrived in Melk in the Wachau valley.

Tomorrow, cruisers will visit the famous Melk Abbey, a Benedictine monastery perched high above the town, and visit nearby Durnstein.

Douro at capacity

PORTUGAL'S Douro River has reached maximum capacity for ships, according to a letter sent out to cruise lines on 31 Mar by the Port Authority of the Douro.

The authority stated that it cannot approve additional ships to sail on the waterway until it completed a review of operational conditions, citing issues surrounding lock usage and operational limits.

Multiple cruise lines, including Scenic, Emerald, Uniworld, and Tauck, plan to add a vessel to the waterway in 2027, followed by AmaWaterways and Amadeus River Cruises in 2028.

Tauck CEO Jennifer Tombaugh touched on the issue during a Cleveland Research panel last month, saying newbuilds would be paused while the capacity constraints are assessed.

Vital new alliance launched

CRUISE industry leaders have teamed up with farmers, suppliers, travel agents and tourism operators to launch the Australian Paddock to Port Alliance, a national campaign to make the case for a strong and competitive cruise sector.

Unveiled at Select Fresh Providores in St Peters, Sydney today, the new alliance will highlight the businesses behind each cruise ship visit, including produce suppliers, hotels, tour operators, transport providers, retailers and businesses in regional communities.

The new entity will work with these stakeholders to demonstrate the value of the cruise industry to Australian jobs, regional economies and holiday choice.

"Cruise lines have been warning that Australia is becoming uncompetitive as a destination and risks losing cruise tourism to other countries, due to regulatory uncertainties and rising costs," CLIA Australasia executive director Joel Katz explained.

"This is despite the fact that demand is very strong and Aussies are cruising in record numbers.

"Every cruise that comes to Australia creates activity before, during and after the voyage, from the food loaded on board, to the hotels passengers stay in, the tours they book, the transport they use and the local businesses they support.

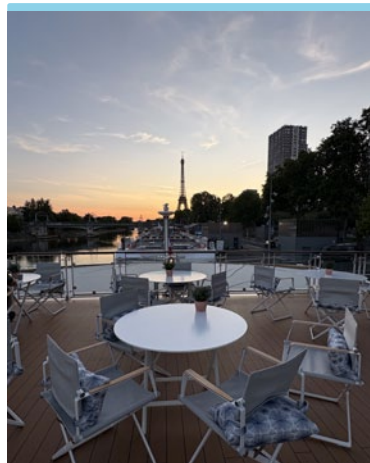


"We are asking for stable, practical and competitive settings so Australia can continue to attract cruise ships, passengers and investment," Katz added.

According to the *Australia's Paddock to Port Economic Impact Report*, cruise contributes more than \$7.3 billion in annual economic activity in Australia and supports more than 22,000 jobs around the country.

Across Australia, cruise passengers spend around \$1.8 billion, including on accommodation, shore excursions, retail, transport, dining and other visitor spending.

"The numbers are significant, but the real story is the breadth of businesses and jobs connected to every ship visit, the people whose livelihoods depend on a strong cruise economy," Tourism and Transport Forum chief executive officer Margy Osmond said. *JM*



Viking Fjolvar

The sun deck

Whether it's admiring the Eiffel Tower at sunrise, or quaint villages nestled in the French countryside, the sun deck at the very top of Viking's longships offers spectacular panoramic views for guests, featuring a shaded seating area and walking track. It is the ideal spot to relax with a glass of champagne in hand.



On location in
Vernon

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, aboard the brand new **Viking Fjolvar**.

WE are enjoying balmy 38°C weather in the French countryside today, docked in the provincial town of Vernon.

This morning, several Australian travel agents travelled to the historic village of La Roche-Guyon where they strolled the streets and visited the medieval castle, ahead of a visit to the bucolic house and gardens of Monet.



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Explora Journeys names newcomer

EXPLORA Journeys officially named *Explora III*, its first LNG-powered ship, at a ceremony in Barcelona overnight.

The celebration brought together esteemed guests and senior leadership from Explora Journeys and MSC Group, including the latter's executive chairman for the cruise division, Pierfrancesco Vago.

Vago, along with Explora Journeys president Anna Nash (**pictured**) and Port of Barcelona president José Alberto Carbonell, gave an address on the night, while marine educator and founder of conservation organisation Vellmari, Cristina Ozores, carried out a traditional blessing as the ship's godmother.

Guests then gathered throughout *Explora III*'s culinary venues for a gala dinner before enjoying an evening of entertainment, including a



performance from disco icons Sister Sledge feat. Kathy Sledge and a DJ set from internationally acclaimed Bob Sinclar.

"Naming *Explora III* is a momentous occasion that reflects both the trajectory of our fleet and our steadfast commitment to shaping the future of ultra-elegant ocean travel," Nash said.

"Conceived as a destination in her own right, *Explora III* brings to life an even more

generous expression of space, design, gastronomy and holistic wellbeing, with every detail encouraging the presence and connection that defines our unique 'Ocean State of Mind'."

The new vessel has now set sail on her seven-night maiden journey to Lisbon, kicking off the start of her inaugural season, which will encompass Northern Europe, Iceland, Greenland and North America. *JM*

Unforgettable sales

UNFORGETTABLE Croatia is on track to achieve another record season, with more than 98% of its cabins sold and half the program booked within weeks of going on sale.

The strong results are being driven by demand from Down Under, with Aussies accounting for one in four guests booked on the line's 2026 sailings.

Graham Carter, co-founder of Unforgettable Croatia, said Australia was "a big contributor to the growth in land and cruise packages".

"The average trip duration this year is 10 days, showing how many guests are book-ending their cruise with hotel stays and land tours to neighbouring countries."

The line's 2027 program, which it recently unveiled (**CW** 28 May), was also attracting strong sales, with almost a third (29%) of cabins already sold.



What's New for 2027-2029

- NEW Emerald Raiya
- NEW Emerald Xara
- NEW Asia Cruising
- NEW Australian & South Pacific Cruising
- NEW Yacht & River cruising combinations

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IF YOU are going to break the rules on a cruise ship, it is probably not the smartest idea to publicly boast about how you got away with it.

TikTok influencer Courtney Murley earned herself a lifetime ban from Carnival Cruise Line (CCL) after revealing to her followers how she smuggled liquor onto *Carnival Conquest* by hiding it inside tampon wrappers and shampoo bottles in her suitcase.

"Def waited until after I got home to post this," she wrote in the caption.

"Hahahaha, but it worked.

"Forget a drink package lol.... okay we ended up drinking probably what we would of paid for a drink package anyways but still was fun to try and see if the rum runners would work."

After being permanently banned by CCL, Murley insisted that the video was "not real at all" and "just for the views".

Kahn cruises the Kimberley



PONANT Explorations recently treated three home-based travel advisors to an iconic Kimberley experience on board its five-star luxury expedition vessel, *Le Jacques Cartier*.

The educational famil, hosted by national sales manager - home based agents, Sandra Cahill, departed Broome on 02 Jul, visiting the King George River, Hunter River, Montgomery Reef and the ancient Gwion Gwion rock art.

Also travelling on the departure was Ronni Kahn, CEO of OzHarvest, which works with Ponant to fight food waste. *JM*

Pictured: Vicky King, Smart Flyer; Sandra Cahill,

Ponant Explorations; Emma Grose, MTA; Ronni Kahn, OzHarvest; and Nicole Cambourn, TravelManagers.

Blue Lagoon sale

BLUE Lagoon Cruises is offering 25% savings on its three-, four- and seven-night sailings aboard *MV Yasawa Princess* until 28 Aug.

Travellers can enjoy the discount across double share fares for departures through to 29 Mar 2027, as well as receive a complimentary 'Moments at Malamala' experience, including an FJ\$50 food and beverage voucher per adult.

Agents can log into the line's trade booking portal **HERE** and use the promo code 'BLCAUNZ25%' to book.



On Board: AmaSofia

The Chef's Table

The Chef's Table is an intimate, 24-seat specialty venue located at the aft of the brand-new AmaSofia. Featuring an open-kitchen set-up and casual opening seating, the restaurant offers a multi-course gourmet tasting menu with wine pairings at no extra charge, and serves an Italian lunch with daily pizza and pasta options.



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