

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise news including a photo page from **Carnival**.



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' mega famil today departs for Linz, Austria's third-largest city, where guests will embark on a range of shore excursions throughout the landlocked Central European country.

One of the most popular will be the Mauthausen Memorial, which was once home to the Mauthausen concentration camp, the main Nazi base of its kind in Austria.

The camps held tens of thousands of inmates, who were forced to work as slave labourers under conditions that caused many deaths.

Other guests will depart for St. Florian Monastery, an Augustinian abbey in the town of Sankt Florian.

The monastery was founded in the ninth century, and is the largest of its kind in the region.

Aus growing fast for Ama



AUSTRALIA is currently the fastest-growing source market for AmaWaterways globally, managing director Steve Richards has revealed to **Cruise Weekly** - and the local office has even bigger goals ahead.

Speaking aboard this week's River of Rewards mega famil (**CW** yesterday), Richards said the Australian office, which only opened two-and-a-half years ago (**CW** 17 Aug 2023), is growing both locally and on an international scale.

Australia currently ranks third behind the United States, AmaWaterways' home market, and the United Kingdom - and Richards' plan is for it to soon eclipse Britain.

"My goal is to be the second-biggest source market up to North America," he said.

Richards said this means travel advisors can expect continued market activity through Q3 and Q4, particularly as Australian

passengers grow an affinity for AmaWaterways' new Colombian product on the Magdalena River.

"It was slow to take off from Australia but people are really fascinated by the idea.

"It comes down to agents packaging it with other components of South America... putting it together with Machu Picchu, the Galapagos, the Amazon," he explained.

Richards told **Cruise Weekly** AmaWaterways' continued investment in ships is backed by French multinational LVMH.

The cruise line's goal is to build its fleet out to 50 ships by the end of the decade, which will mean more than just adding vessels to its core European rivers, Richards explained.

"They're also in the exotics as well, [with] more ships on the Nile, which is doing really well; the Chobe River; [and we're] looking at what more we can do in Colombia as well," he said. *MS*



On location on board
Viking Fjolvar

Today's issue of **Cruise Weekly** is coming to you courtesy of **Viking**, as we sail through France.

IT WAS quite a sobering day on our famil with Viking, as we joined agents on a fascinating shore excursion learning about the history of the Commonwealth during WWII.

Hosted by a local guide, we visited the beaches of Normandy where the Allies landed on D-Day and paid our respects to the fallen British, Aussie and NZ soldiers at Bayeux War Cemetery.

To end the day on a lighter note, we relaxed in the lounge while listening to a jazz duo play classics from the WWII era.

A third for Crystal

CRYSTAL has announced that the contract for the construction of its third next-generation ocean ship by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri has become effective.

Scheduled for delivery in 2034, the vessel is covered by the option exercised in 2024, and will join *Crystal Grace*, which is now being built at Fincantieri's Marghera shipyard ahead of her debut in 2028.



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Atlas opens 2028

ATLAS Ocean Voyages has announced its Europe collection for 2028, featuring 37 expeditions between Apr and Sep.

The season will introduce 12 brand-new ports of call, with highlights such as Lavrion, Greece; Casamicciola Terme, Italy; Ostende, Belgium; and Fjallbacka, Sweden.

Each itinerary has been designed to allow guests to visit major landmarks as well as boutique ports often inaccessible by larger ships.

Across the season, there are 26 overnight stays on offer, with visits to 13 UNESCO World Heritage sites, alongside Atlas' signature experiences.

Agents bloom in France



FROM impressionist art to medieval chateau life, a group of travel agents are enjoying a dose of French history during a famil hosted by Viking this week.

The eight-day river cruise is currently sailing from Paris to Normandy on board *Viking Fjolvar*, with shore excursions hosted in historic towns including Rouen, Les Andelys and Vernon.

"Our guests are curious by nature and want to connect more deeply with the places they visit, whether that's exploring ancient sites in Egypt, medieval towns along Europe's rivers or the history woven throughout the Mediterranean," Viking MD Australia Michelle Black told *Cruise Weekly*.

"Between our onboard historians, guest lecturers, destination talks and curated libraries, the exploration doesn't stop when they return to the ship

each day."

Helloworld Travel's Freya Berry took part in a walking tour through Monet's house and garden in Giverny this week.

"The gardens were very well-maintained and very beautiful," she said.

"Despite Monet's legacy to this day, many of his artworks were denied by the Louvre... he later rented his own place in 1874 to publicly display his artworks."

This week, the agents have also enjoyed a tour of the 12th century Chateau de La Roche-Guyon, where legendary French author Victor Hugo stayed on multiple occasions, and served as inspiration for his novels.

Guests also visited the idyllic 17th-century seaside town of Honfleur, featuring the wooden Church of St Catherine, waterfront houses and colourful fishing boats. *JHM*

Transcending rivers

TRANSCEND Cruises held a naming ceremony for *Transcend Connect* at Den Breejen shipyard in the Netherlands on Mon, attended by her godmother Marja van Bijsterveldt and her captain Ruurd Boonstra.

The vessel, which has been purpose-built for business events, meetings and incentive travel, carried a group of travel planners, tour operators and corporate event planners on a short cruise before the naming ceremony.

Connect will soon be chartered by National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions with electronic signage changed accordingly.



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**On Board: AmaSofia
Sun Deck**

The Sun Deck serves as AmaSofia's ultimate outdoor relaxation and activity hub. The ship's top space is highlighted by a heated pool with a swim-up bar - a rarity in the river sector. The Sun Deck also features a walking track which spans the length of the deck, relaxation areas with comfortable sun loungers, and a recreation and games area with a giant chess board.



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Thursday 6th August 2026

Agents and families return to popular Carnival Cruise Line family

CARNIVAL Cruise Line recently successfully hosted its second annual Family Famil, welcoming nine travel agents and their loved ones aboard *Carnival Encounter* for an unforgettable first-hand experience of Carnival's fun-filled family holiday offering.

Hosted by business development manager Emma Judge and inside sales representative Julie Boustani, the sailing departed from Brisbane and explored the South Pacific, giving agents the opportunity to experience Carnival with their families.

Throughout the sailing, guests enjoyed a variety of exclusive experiences, including a behind-the-stage tour offering a unique glimpse into Carnival's onboard entertainment operations, as well as the Dr Seuss-themed Thing 1 & Thing 2 Birthday Breakfast.

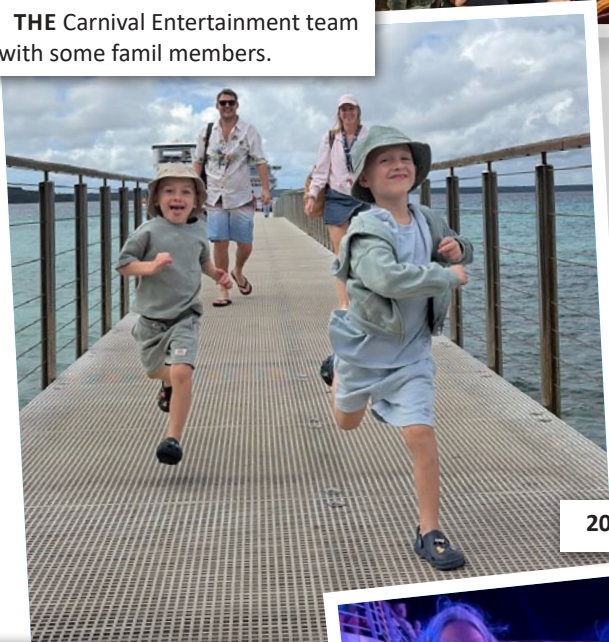
Alongside hosted activities, agents and their families also enjoyed free time ashore to explore the South Pacific destinations and create their own holiday memories together.

"Our Family Famil is a fantastic way to thank our travel agent partners while showcasing the unforgettable experiences Carnival delivers for families," Mark Richards, national sales manager said.

"We were delighted to bring the program back for a second year and give agents the chance to experience *Carnival Encounter* with their loved ones."



THE Carnival Entertainment team with some famil members.



LITTLE cruisers having fun in Lifou.



2026 Family Famil participants.



DECK party fun!



FAMILIES enjoying Thing 1 & Thing 2 Birthday Breakfast.



PICTURE-PERFECT in Lifou.



THE white-hot silent disco night was a hit with the famil group.



AMERICAN country music group The Zac Brown Band made live music history this week when they gave away US\$40 million (A\$56.7 million) worth of cruises to everyone in the audience.

More than 37,000 fans will now get to enjoy a free sailing for two on board *Margaritaville at Sea* next year.

Fittingly, Brown broke the news to the lucky crowd just before the band performed their song *Same Boat*.

"We were honoured to work alongside Zac to help bring this incredible surprise to life for his fans," Christopher Ivy, chief executive officer of *Margaritaville at Sea*, said.

"This was an extraordinary way to thank the fans who have supported him throughout his career, and we're proud to have helped make that incredible vision a once-in-a-lifetime reality."

Agents raise a glass to Ama



AMAWATERWAYS' River of Rewards mega famil today departed from its first shore excursions, as *AmaSofia* remained docked in Austria's Wachau Valley (**CW** 05 Aug 2026).

The morning saw guests travel into Melk, the town playing host to the ship, to visit its famous Benedictine Melk Abbey.

Guests wandered the 11th-century site and saw the remains of several members of the House of Babenberg, which was

Austria's first ruling dynasty.

The afternoon saw passengers head further up the Danube to Durnstein, one of the most popular destinations in the region, and a well-known wine-growing area.

Guests enjoyed a walking tour around town and sampled local delicacies such as chocolate, while experiencing some of the region's famous drops from a local vintner. **MS**

Pictured: Wine tasting underway.

Be a wine expert

AZAMARA Cruises has introduced a new onboard wine experience, allowing guests to gain an internationally recognised wine certification.

Travellers will be able to earn the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines aboard *Azamara Quest* on her 18 Dec 2026 departure and aboard *Azamara Journey* on the 'South America Cruise' departing 10 Mar 2027, thanks to the line's new partnership with American Wine School.

The introductory course will combine expert instruction with guided tastings, with participants learning about major grape varieties, wine styles, service, storage, and food pairings before taking the official exam on board.

Priced at \$275 per guest, the certification course offers savings of around 20-30% compared to similar land-based WSET programs.

All guests aboard the featured sailings will also enjoy pop-up tastings and destination-inspired food and wine pairing sessions.

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