



DISCOVERY SESSIONS

30 June - **Perth** - Pan Pacific

2 July - **Brisbane** - The Calile Hotel

7 July - **Sydney** - Four Seasons

9 July - **Melbourne** - 1 Hotel

INCENTIVES FOR VALUED PARTNERS:

- **NEW:** The chance to win a 2026 Mystery Cruise*
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- Invite your clients to be inspired and have a taste of PONANT's signature style.

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*The winner will be selected at random by PONANT Explorations and notified by email. The Prize consists of one cruise cabin for two guests aboard a PONANT Explorations voyage, with the cabin category, voyage, travel dates and voyage length determined at the sole discretion of PONANT Explorations as part of the Mystery Cruise experience. The Prize includes cruise accommodation only and does not include airfare to and from the embarkation or disembarkation point, transfers unless otherwise specified, pre- or post-voyage hotel accommodation, travel insurance, optional land programs, stateroom upgrades, or any other personal expenses. Travel insurance is mandatory when taking the cruise and may be purchased at an additional cost. Optional land programs, stateroom upgrades, transfers and flights may also be purchased at an additional cost. The Prize is non-refundable, non-transferable for cash value, and cannot be redeemed for cash or onboard credit. The voyage and cabin is confirmed 2 months prior to departure. Should the winner advise PONANT Explorations that they are unable to travel, the Prize may be transferred to another Travel Agent, in the business provided PONANT Explorations is notified within the required timeframe. If the winner declines the Prize and/or fails to respond within the required timeframe, the Prize will be forfeited. In such circumstances, PONANT Explorations reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to select an alternative winner and shall have no further liability to the original winner.^Prize is \$200 Dining Gift Card and is not transferrable for cash. Winners will be notified by email and card will be sent by express post to your Agency address. Contact your state manager or salesAPAC@ponant.com for full information.



Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a cover wrap from **Ponant Explorations** and a full page from **CLIA**.

AmaRudi revealed

AMAWATERWAYS has released the first renderings of its second double-width river ship, *AmaRudi*, which is set to debut on the Danube in 2027.

Designed to accommodate 196 guests in 98 staterooms and suites, *AmaRudi* will be the sister ship of *AmaMagna*, which launched in 2019.

The vessel is the first in the company's history to be named after a man, honouring the cruise line's co-founder & chair Rudi Schreiner.

There will also be a venue on the ship named after Schreiner - Rudi's Wine Bar - as well as new Italian lunch menus served in The Chef's Table and a built-in Deck Club barbecue on the Sun Deck.

AmaRudi will offer a brand-new entertainment hub featuring a cinema, karaoke, billiards, and a jukebox.

"From the moment *AmaMagna* launched, travellers and advisors have been asking if we would ever build another ship like her," CEO Catherine Powell said.

Book Cruise360

BOOK your spot at Cruise Lines International Association's Cruise360 today.

The annual cruise conference is set to take place from 17-18 Sep at ICC Sydney.

Attendees will hear inspiring conference sessions as well as industry insights and updates, while enjoying a dynamic trade exhibition.

There will also be valuable networking opportunities - see more on **page four**.

Cruise is critical for Dubai



REESTABLISHING a cruise presence is critical for the success of Dubai's travel industry and hitting the targets of the 'D33' economic agenda, according to Shahab Shayan (**pictured**), regional director for Asia-Pacific at the Dubai Department of Economy & Tourism (DET).

Speaking to media in Sydney yesterday, Shayan explained there is a dedicated team for cruising in the country, and that it is a "critical part" of the ecosystem.

"Cruise is something that we've seen growing and we've seen the number of cruise ships actually grow," Shayan said.

Dubai has transformed into one of the premier global hubs for the cruise sector over the past decade, driven by massive infrastructure investments and capacity upgrades.

This saw the destination attract home port ships from lines such as Costa Cruises, MSC Cruises, and AIDA Cruises over the past few years, with port investments allowing Dubai to host multiple ships simultaneously.

However, this presence has waned of late, with lines such as Celestyal Cruises recently abandoning its fledgling Arabian Gulf program after its ships became trapped in the region following the outbreak of the Iran war (**CW 29 May**).

Explora Journeys also cancelled its future deployment, which was

set to commence later this year (**CW 26 Mar**).

Other mainstays such as Costa and AIDA withdrew their winter programs before the war (**CW 29 Jul**), as geopolitical tensions and security concerns highlighted a potential future operational crisis.

In order to reactivate growth, Shayan asserted that it is up to Dubai to ensure that "the structure is there, the stability is there, and that we can provide safety and security, which is the number one thing, especially with the cruise industry".

"There's multiple incentives that come into play - there's obviously partnerships that we do around the region, so GCC partnerships with Cruise Arabia," he explained.

The United Arab Emirates, led by Abu Dhabi and Dubai, spearheaded the Cruise Arabia Alliance in 2013, aiming to create cohesive regional itineraries across Middle Eastern destinations such as Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

"On top of that, I think it's the relationships and how we actually work with [airline] Emirates, because a lot of times now we actually fly in passengers to start their cruises in Dubai, which was not the case a few years ago."

Shayan believes the UAE's investment in new cruise terminals and related infrastructure will position Dubai well for coming seasons. **DF**

Venice fee hiked?

THE new Mayor of Venice Simone Venturini is pushing for a hike of the city's entry fee to €50 (approx A\$82) - a raise of 900%.

Venice's council is also evaluating whether to extend the fee throughout the entire year, or include more dates within its catchment.

The current rates - €5 for advance booking and €10 for last-minute - are not proving to be the disincentive they were hoped to be.

"With a sliding rate and a much higher cap, applied every day, we could impact traffic," Venice's Association of Hoteliers director Daniele Minotto said.

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Azamara goes big

AZAMARA Cruises has unveiled 'The Next Big Thing is Small', a new global campaign inspired by the evolution of modern travel.

The new campaign reflects the growing demand for international travel experiences centred on immersion, connection, and more time.

Azamara will launch the campaign across television, digital, social, print and trade channels, as demand continues to build for immersive cruising defined by access to smaller destinations, and longer port calls.

"With 'The Next Big Thing is Small' we're celebrating what makes travel truly impactful," chief executive officer Dondra Ritzenthaler said.

"The experiences that stay with us aren't always the grandest moments - they're often the unexpected conversations, the hidden discoveries, and the personal connections that happen when we have the time and space to fully immerse ourselves in a destination," she added.

"We've always believed that smaller ships create bigger opportunities for those moments, and that belief has never been more relevant than it is today as travellers increasingly seek experiences that feel authentic, personal, and emotionally rewarding."

HX's promising news

HX HAS extended its HX Greenland Promise to all of its Greenland sailings next year.

The promise means that any guest who has their sailing cancelled or whose government advises against travel can transfer to another sailing or receive a refund - call HX on 1300 159 127.

Viking's Rhine agent famil



VIKING commercial manager Queensland Helen Mezzan hosted a group of travel advisors on the cruise line's 'Rhine Getaway' earlier this season, an eight-day river journey from Basel to Amsterdam.

Sailing through Switzerland, Germany, France and the Netherlands, the itinerary offers a diverse snapshot of Europe, with travel advisors experiencing a mix of charming riverside towns and culturally rich cities.

The journey featured a mix of iconic destinations and hidden gems along the Rhine, including Breisach, Strasbourg, Speyer, Rudesheim, Koblenz, Cologne, and Kinderdijk.

Advisors gained a first-hand experience of Viking's river product, including the onboard experience, dining, itinerary flow, and immersive shore excursions.

The latter included the 'Top of Cologne' experience, one of Viking's 'Privileged Access' excursions offering rare access to areas of the cathedral unopen to the public, such as close-up views of intricate stained-glass windows; guided insights into the cathedral's history; and access to the roof and spire for panoramic city views.

While on board, advisors experienced Viking's destination-

focused dining, with menus reflecting the regions visited, with a highlight of the sailing a themed German dinner.

Mezzan said the itinerary is perfect for first-time river cruisers, those looking for a shorter European cruise, as well as clients wishing to combine a river cruise with a broader Europe trip. *MS*

Pictured: The group takes in Cologne at night.

This is Travel is here

CURATED Travel Marketing, the company behind Luxperience, has announced a new trade show targeting the premium and lifestyle market, including cruise.

Taking place from 04-07 May 2027 at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, This is Travel will connect advisors and buyer delegates from across Australia and New Zealand with global travel brands, from cruise lines and tour companies to boutique hotels and adventure travel operators.

Advisors and delegates looking to get involved can contact client relationship director Joe Rawlins at events@thisistravel.com.au.

Discover Ponant

PONANT Explorations will host discovery sessions across four Australian cities in Jun and Jul, not five, as initially reported in *Cruise Weekly*.

Travel advisors in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth will hear from Ponant over the next two months, with a range of new incentives to be introduced at the events.

Discovery Sessions will take place on 30 Jun in Perth (Pan Pacific), 02 Jul in Brisbane (The Calile Hotel), 07 Jul in Sydney (Four Seasons Hotel) and 09 Jul in Melbourne (1 Hotel).

Those who attend will have the opportunity to win a 2026 mystery cruise, and will go into the draw for a dinner voucher.



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Stay Updated

on the latest cruise news

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IT SUCKS when your phone goes on a cruise without you - an experience that Sydney man Ed Burke is now familiar with.

After losing his phone at Noumea City Market last week, Burke - who was not a cruiser - checked his FindMyPhone app to discover that the device had gotten its own lift back to Australia via *Carnival Splendor*.

It turns out that a Carnival guest had found the phone at the markets and, assuming it belonged to a cruiser, handed the phone in to guest services on the ship.

After posting his dilemma on a Carnival Facebook forum, *Splendor* guests helped reunite Burke with his phone (pictured) at the Overseas Passenger Terminal yesterday.



Save the best for Crystal

AMERICAN singer Vanessa Williams will bring her iconic voice to Crystal later this year on an exclusive voyage aboard *Crystal Serenity*.

The special sailing will depart on 23 Nov, with Williams set to take to the stage for an exclusive live performance while on board, showcasing a curated selection of her greatest hits.

Guests will also enjoy an intimate Q&A session, offering a rare opportunity to hear personal stories and insights from her remarkable career, which has seen her win the Miss America pageant, top the US Billboard Hot 100 music charts, and act on both the stage and the screen.

The nine-night round trip voyage from Fort Lauderdale to Cartagena will feature stops in some of the most beautiful ports in the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic, the British Virgin Islands, and Aruba.

An overnight stay in the final destination of Cartagena will allow guests plenty of time to explore the destination's food and cultural scene.

Guests on board will also enjoy



a Thanksgiving feast on 26 Nov.

"I'm so excited to join *Crystal Serenity* this Nov and look forward to celebrating with my family and guests through music, stories and festive moments," Williams said.

MEANWHILE, Crystal recently celebrated the steel-cutting for *Crystal Grace*, the cruise line announced earlier this month, as construction officially began on its newest ship (**CW 01 Jun**).

The ceremony took place at the Fincantieri shipyard in Venice, ahead of *Grace's* scheduled delivery in May 2028.

Focusing on exceptional service, spacious design, and immersive travel, *Grace* will introduce Crystal's next generation of ships, with two more to follow in 2031 and 2032. **MS**

American's top gun

AMERICAN Cruise Line's *American Maverick* has been christened in Rhode Island, with the company celebrating the launch of its second new ship this year.

Maverick, which accommodates 130 guests, was christened during her inaugural nine-day 'New England Islands' round trip cruise from Providence.

Attendees gathered on *Maverick's* top deck for the official blessing and sacrificial bottle break, followed by a traditional New England clambake at Fort Adams State Park, nearby to where the ship was docked.

The celebration took place with guests, crew members, community partners, and a number of employees from American's headquarters in Guilford, Connecticut.

Maverick's delivery will be followed by the arrival of *American Ranger*, *American Mariner*, and *American Navigator* over the next year.

The cruise line also launched *American Encore* last month.



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