



# CRUISE

WEEKLY

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## Cruise Weekly today

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



On location in Switzerland

Today's issue of CW is coming to you on board Avalon Waterways' Avalon Envision.

CRUISE Weekly is in Zurich to travel with Avalon Waterways on its training charter sailing from Basel to Amsterdam.

Travel advisors will board Envision tomorrow to sail up the Rhine and visit ports in France and Germany, before arriving in the Dutch capital.

Agents will also learn about Avalon's product, experience the ship, shore tours, and more.

## Encounter returns from dry dock

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line's Brisbane-based ship *Carnival Encounter* returned to her home port from her dry dock (**CW** 19 Feb) on Fri.

The ship now boasts a fresh look inside and out, following two weeks of work in Singapore.

Highlights of the revamp include a new hull design in Carnival's signature colours, a spa relaxation zone, and fresh entertainment.

Guests can now unwind in the Cloud 9 Spa Thermal Suite, which features heated thermal lounges, saunas, and steam baths.

All five pool areas have been revitalised, while seven Jacuzzi tubs have been replaced.

*Encounter's* sports court has also been reinvigorated, as have the ship's Twin Racer water slides.

Carnival's assistant vice president sales and marketing Anton Loeb said he is excited to offer Queenslanders the new

spa experiences, as well as an updated lineup of entertainment "onboard the only cruise ship sailing year-round from Brisbane".

"*Carnival Encounter* provides a great value holiday at sea in autumn, winter, spring, or summer," Loeb enthused.

Passengers can now watch two new shows for Australian-based ships, including *Rock Revolution: Summer of 69*.

Director of entertainment Jeremy Barnes, speaking on board *Encounter* on Fri, said its Queensland-based guests love Carnival's live music, influencing the decision to bring the show to its Brisbane-based ship.

In addition is *Broadway Beats*, a journey through New York City's famous show tunes.

*Encounter* guests can also now enjoy *Dear Future Husband*, which is available on a range of Carnival's other ships (**CW** 12 Sep

2024); as well as *Seuss-a-Palooza Story Time - Green Eggs & Ham* for younger guests.

Loeb said Carnival is delighted with the reception *Encounter* has received into the cruise line's fleet, following her arrival from former sister brand P&O Australia 12 months ago (**CW** 31 Mar).

"We're thrilled with how well Queenslanders have embraced *Encounter* and brought her into the Carnival family," he said on board the vessel on Fri.

"For us, having a four-ship fleet now in Australia, where each ship is quite different...it was never the intention to make these things carbon copies of each other," Loeb added.

"Each ship now has something that should suit every guest."

*Encounter* has since resumed year-round sailings around the South Pacific, including Vanuatu, Fiji, New Caledonia and more. *MS*



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## New cruise terminal

EUROPE'S largest cruise terminal, the Las Palmas Cruise Port, has officially opened in Gran Canaria, Spain.

An inauguration ceremony for the new port took place on Fri, bringing together local authorities and business leaders including Global Ports Holding (GPH) chairman Mehmet Kutman, Beatriz Calzada, president of the Port Authority of Las Palmas, and Francisco Grau, GPH's regional director West Med.

Operated by GPH, the terminal building spans 14,000 sqm across two levels and can accommodate up to four cruise ships simultaneously.

The terminal is part of a larger €40 million investment to modernise cruise terminals across the Canary Islands, including those in Fuerteventura and Lanzarote.

Constructed by Santocan, all three developments have an emphasis on greater sustainability practices such as the use of recycled materials, responsible waste management and more prominent use of solar power.

According to GPH, cruise traffic across the three ports has grown from 1.4 million in 2022 to over 2 million passengers in 2025 and with the completion of the new terminals, "the ports are well positioned to unlock the next phase of cruise growth". JB

## Four Seasons debut

FOUR Seasons Yachts' first vessel, the *Four Seasons I*, has begun her maiden voyage in the Mediterranean.

Her debut year will include 32 voyages across 52 sailings, including 130 destinations throughout the Mediterranean in summer and the Caribbean and Bahamas in winter.

## Tahiti bets on cruising



### EXCLUSIVE

**GROWTH** in the popularity of cruising French Polynesia has become so pronounced that it now accounts for 25% of all tourism revenue in the territory.

In an interview with sister title *Travel Daily* about the importance of the cruise sector, Tahiti Tourisme president Bud Gilroy explained efforts to promote voyages had led to 30% of all visitors arriving by plane booking a sailing in the region.

"We've grown our cruise industry from 500 calls to 1,400 calls in just 10 years," Gilroy said.

"For us this is very important growth because it really helps to diversify our offering.

"This segment is the only transportation vector that can get so many tourists to so many remote islands - one ship can sometimes be the equivalent of six domestic flights."

Another key plank of French Polynesia's cruise sector is to sustain cruise growth without impacting the local communities of its many tropical islands.

"Around 90% of our calls are ships with less than 500 passengers," Gilroy explained.

"That's what I like about cruise, because it answers what the locals are looking for as well.

"Passengers on a cruise line are only there from 8am to 6pm, there's no pressure on accommodation or the resources on the islands".

French Polynesia only has one hard cruise limit in place at the tourist-heavy Bora Bora, which is limited to 1,200 passengers a day.

While the other islands do not have specific caps, Gilroy said the broader strategy is to limit visitation to smaller, environmentally conscious cruise lines with no more than roughly 500 passengers per ship.

"On the other islands we have that natural cap already because we cannot provide excursions for so many people at one time."

Gilroy added that in the long-term, this approach allows each island to "develop themselves" and take advantage of an industry that provides long-term visibility.

"It's the only industry that's booked two years in advance, so [local operators] can go to the bank with a business plan."

Other key advantages of visiting French Polynesia by cruise are the dual infrastructure and experience benefits, with voyages taking the pressure off limited hotels on remote islands and delivering multiple island itineraries on one trip. AB

## A royal promotion

PRINCESS Cruises has appointed Moreshnie Pather to key account manager of APAC, where she will forge relationships with the line's general sales agents across markets such as the Philippines, India and Thailand.

Pather will also continue oversight of her existing Australian portfolio.

"Moreshnie's expanded role reflects the strength of relationships she's built and the results she continues to deliver," said Nicholas Ferguson, senior director of sales and marketing, APAC.

"She is well placed to lead our growth across key developing markets."

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**SEVERAL** athletes taking part in the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, will be living out of a cruise ship and wooden huts on the pier for the duration of the event.

Between 4,000 and 5,000 athletes will stay aboard the *Costa Serena* with a further 2,000 athletes staying in wooden shipping container-style accommodation on the Nagoya Garden Pier.

While it may seem unusual, officials said the accommodation is only temporary and claimed it will offer athletes a "unique experience" during the Games.

*Costa Serena* features 571 cabins, seven swimming pools, eight restaurants and nine bars, and is being chartered at a cost of almost \$40 million.

The vessel is also a sister ship of the *Costa Concordia*, which sunk off Tuscany in 2012.

## RAC marks debut expo



**THE** inaugural Travel & Cruise Expo hosted by RAC was held last week, with the Western Australia-based organisation welcoming around 5,000 consumer attendees.

With executive manager of travel and tourism Michael Leary playing MC, guests heard almost 60 informative presentations from more than 40 suppliers across five rooms at the Perth Convention Centre.

A number of prizes were given on the day, while attendees also enjoyed exclusive offers, as well as coffee and gelato.

RAC also introduced a flexible deposit system for members looking for more reassurance, although most were keen to book on the day.

According to RAC, Europe proved to be the hottest product during the expo, with suppliers moving plenty of inventory for next year in particular.

Feedback from members was overwhelmingly positive, RAC said, even with the uncertainty surrounding the Middle East. *MS*

**Pictured:** Suppliers connect with potential clients at RAC WA's inaugural expo.

## Adora in full bloom

**CHINESE** cruise ship *Adora Flora City* was floated out on Friday at Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipyard, the line's second domestically built cruise ship.

She is scheduled for delivery by the end of the year, when she will begin international voyages from Guangzhou.

The float-out coincided with Adora Cruise's announcement of building two more large cruise ships with the option for a third, aligning with the line's fleet expansion strategy, homeport deployment, and itinerary planning in domestic and international markets.

"Our vision is to build a flagship cruise company in China with significant international influence," said CEO Roger Chen.

"With the addition of *Adora Flora City* to our fleet and the newbuild program, we will continue to optimise the deployment, deepen our 'cruise and culture' strategy and refine the guest experiences, bringing high-quality cruise vacations to more travellers." *JHM*



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