



Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant is tempting

PONANT Explorations

Group's latest agent incentive, 'Tempting Tahiti', offers a \$200 gift card for each booked passenger for a limited time.

Travellers also receive \$1,000 shipboard credit on all sailings across the next two years.

Early bookers who reserve select voyages by the end of the month to claim their credit can also enjoy bonus savings of up to 30%.

Paul Gauguin sails across French Polynesia's five groups, including the Society Islands, Tuamotus and more - **page 4**.

Capturing Swans

SWAN Hellenic has

introduced its Antarctic Photography Program, with nine curated departures available from US\$1,000pp.

With a maximum of 10 guests per voyage, the program allows guests to capture the surreal landscape and wildlife of Antarctica, combining professional guidance, dedicated photographic opportunities, daily image feedback and photo-editing workshops.

Leading the inaugural voyage will be British-Canadian photographer Simon Ager, who has had images published in *National Geographic* and *BBC Wildlife on One*.

APT unveils Capricorn



APT Travel Group has revealed the name of its first Travelmarvel ice-class ocean ship as *Capricorn* (**CW** 14 Sep), a landmark moment for the company, which marked the biggest single investment in its history.

Revealed during a special centenary event in Sydney last night, chief executive officer David Cox (**pictured** right) said the vessel, which will have a PC6 ice-class hull, will feature nine decks, accommodate 200 passengers in all-balcony cabins, and boast five restaurants.

"[*Capricorn*] will be at that four-star level where we really feel a market gap exists," Cox said.

APT family principal and director Lou Tandy (**pictured** left) said the name was derived from very personal roots.

"Capricorn is my mother's star sign and a collection of stars in the Southern Hemisphere, but my dad (the late Geoff McGeary) also named his own personal expedition vessel *Beyond Capricorn* for two reasons, and this is a little bit of cheekiness from my dad.

"Firstly, it spent most of its time

beyond the line of Capricorn in the Northern Hemisphere, and the other reason is - a really sweet irony - my mum is afraid of flying, so my dad knew that he would be on the boat alone."

An agreement with Quark Expeditions will see the polar specialist charter the vessel for 10 years from 2029.

Cox also revealed to guests that APT continues to be in a period of rapid expansion, announcing the company has an ambitious growth target of being a billion-dollar business by 2030.

In line with that aspiration, APT yesterday formally confirmed that its third ship for the rivers of Central Europe, *APT Alara*, will launch in 2028, as well as revealing early plans for another vessel in Portugal.

The company is currently in an acquisitive phase of development, with Cox pointing to its purchase of One Traveller in Jan, a UK-based solo-travel specialist, as part of this strategy.

This move was made alongside its decision to buy a majority stake in Murray River Paddlesteamers (**CW** 04 Jun). **AB**

New Nile journey

VIKING has announced a new 19-day 'Grand Nile Journey' for 2028, which is now open for booking.

The itinerary will explore iconic landmarks and lesser-known destinations along the Nile, in what is being billed as Viking's most in-depth exploration of Egypt to date.

Featuring four hotel nights in Cairo and a 14-night sailing between Egypt's capital and Aswan, the itinerary will sail on board the all-suite *Viking Ra*.

Passengers will enjoy 17 guided tours designed to provide a more comprehensive exploration of Egypt's history and traditions.

Beginning in Cairo, the first days of the itinerary will include the Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx of Giza, and the Grand Egyptian Museum, before continuing into the heart of Egypt.

Guests will then discover the Meidum Pyramid; the Beni Hasan ancient funerary site; Amarna, an extensive archaeological site containing the ruins of Akhetaten; and the Deir el-Muharrak complex.

Continuing south, guests will experience the grandeur of ancient Egypt at the temples of Luxor and Karnak, the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings, and the Temple of Seti I at Abydos.

The journey also includes time in Aswan, where guests can explore the Philae temple complex and immerse themselves in the monolithic temples at Abu Simbel. **MS**



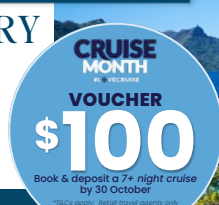
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An ocean of opportunity for agents

HAPAG-LLOYD Cruises has introduced its new e-learning platform, Ocean Academy, a flexible, interactive, multimedia experience designed to deepen travel advisors' knowledge of the German brand.

The Ocean Academy provides detailed information on ship layouts, restaurants, staterooms, Zodiac cruising in warm and cold destinations, highlights on board and ashore, and other details about the fleet and Hapag-Lloyd's pricing model.

Each course can be paused at any time, and progress is automatically saved, allowing travel advisors to return later and continue where they left off.

Agents who complete each training course will receive a personal certificate upon doing so, and those who complete all of them before the end of Nov will be automatically entered into a



prize draw for a seminar cruise on one of Hapag-Lloyd's ships to a surprise location.

The destination, travel dates and further details of the prize will be announced in the first quarter of next year.

Hapag-Lloyd's Ocean Academy is available through its Agent

Compass, the primary B2B digital gateway for travel partners.

The cruise line has upped its investment in the Australian market of late, earlier this year taking five trade partners on an exclusive faml aboard the expedition vessel *Hanseatic Inspiration* (CW 28 May). MS

New brox on *Star*

A **NEW** brochure for 2027 and video has been released for Australia's first five-star river ship *Australian Star* (CW 13 Oct).

Murray River Paddlesteamers' newly launched ship is detailed in the brochure, which includes her three- to seven-night year-round cruises from Echuca.

CLICK HERE to download Murray River Paddlesteamers' brochures and **CLICK HERE** to view the new video.

Special launch savings of up to \$2,500 per couple are currently available on selected seven-night Murray River cruises aboard *Australian Star* in 2027 and 2028, for those booking by the end of Oct.

Australian Star, which launched earlier this month, is the world's only woodfired luxury paddle steamer. MS



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IF YOU think you see a motorcycle flying alongside your cruise ship in the future, your eyes may not be playing tricks on you.

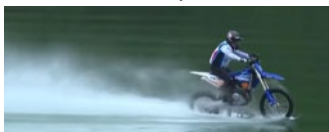
A Chinese entrepreneur recently earned a Guinness World Record for taking his modified motorcycle for a journey of more than 25 miles across the water.

Zhang Xue, founder of motorcycle manufacturer ZXMOTO, used a modified MX450 motorcycle to take a ride across the surface of the Chen River in Mayang, China.

The motorcycle's modifications included the addition of an amphibious ski, which allows the vehicle to be driven over land or water.

It generated forward motion on the river by using the rear tyre to push water backward.

The stunt earned him the record for the longest distance travelled on open water by a modified motorcycle.



APT's century of success



AS APT Travel Group celebrated its centenary with a lavish ceremony last night, its owner and principal Lou Tandy recalled its humble beginnings.

When APT's founder Bill McGeary died, it was up to his wife Hazel to determine whether to sell the business or allow her son Geoff to manage it.

Tandy recalled the now-famous counsel delivered to Hazel by the family accountant.

"The advice was 'Hazel, you really should sell up now'.

"Your son is a dope, he has dyslexia...it is going to amount to nothing so sell [APT] while you have still got something," Tandy said with a wry smile.

"That was the strong view of the accountant, so Dad really

had to convince his mum, [telling her], 'look, give me one or two years', and he turned APT into something really wonderful."

Tandy added that in 2026, 100 years on, APT has proven that it is still kicking goals and showing the industry that it is always looking to improve the business.

"Only a few weeks ago we won the NTIA for Most Outstanding Tour Operator globally - that's the one we really wanted," she said.

"I know that might seem like just an award, but what it means to us is that after 100 years, we've still got it."

Tandy told guests that APT has a "bright future ahead", hinting at big announcements for 2027. **AB**

Pictured: Tandy and CEO David Cox last night in Sydney.

Fred's strong start

FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines has recorded its strongest-ever trading day, following the launch of its 2028 season (**CW** 06 Oct).

A majority of the demand was for its 13-night 'Northern European' voyage, as well as its 18-night 'Italian Riviera and Amalfi Coast' cruise and the 37-night Caribbean island-hopping sailing.

The wider 2028 program features 39 cruises departing between Jan and Jul, with itineraries covering the Norwegian fjords, British Isles, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic islands.

It marks the second time this year that Fred. Olsen surpassed its record, with the previous instance coming off the back of the launch of the 87-night 2028 'Amazon & Antarctica Grand Voyage' back in Jul (**CW** 22 Jul).

Guests who book a 2028 sailing before 04 Nov will receive Fred. Olsen's Freedom Fare Price Promise, ensuring that their departure will not be offered at a lower price within the first four weeks of going on sale.

Additionally, solo travellers can select a range of cabins with no solo supplement. **JB**

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