

Cruise Weekly today

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

Cruise360 is here

AUSTRALIA'S biggest cruise event kicks off in Sydney this week, with hundreds of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) members set to gather for the 2026 Cruise360 Australasia conference.

The event is designed to help travel advisors tap into the trends and opportunities of the international cruise sector under the theme 'Future Ready. Client Ready. Cruise Ready'.

Taking place at the ICC Sydney, this year's program features a mix of international cruise experts and local industry figures.

Highlights will include a fresh look at opportunities in river cruising, insights on tapping into luxury clientele, how agents can use artificial intelligence, and an analysis of the 'dollars and sense' of selling expedition cruising.

"This year's Cruise360 Australasia conference will be focused on understanding that growing demand and equipping our members to harness the opportunities it brings," CLIA executive director Joel Katz said.

Find the full program [HERE](#).

New polar partnership forged



A NEW partnership between Travelmarvel and Quark Expeditions will see the Australian company's recently announced ocean ship head to Antarctica with the expedition cruise line (**CW** breaking news).

The 10-year agreement will see Quark charter the as-yet unnamed vessel (**CW** 08 Sep) for 10 years from 2029, the ship's debut season.

"Partnering with Quark Expeditions allows us to maximise the potential of this incredible vessel year-round, pairing our strengths in relaxed, enriching ocean cruising with Quark's unmatched expertise in polar expedition travel," APT Travel Group chief executive officer David Cox said.

"This is about giving guests access to two extraordinary experiences on one ship, backed by two of the best names in travel," he enthused.

Quark president Sam Seward added: "By collaborating with APT Travel Group during the development process, we have an opportunity to help prepare a ship that is truly built for exploration, with the capabilities and operational features needed to help guests get off the ship efficiently and experience more of Antarctica."

Currently under development, the vessel will feature just 99 suites and a PC6 ice-class hull, as well as features designed for expedition travel, such as mudrooms and embarkation and disembarkation areas.

Further details about the vessel, including her name, complete specifications, and her inaugural Mediterranean and Antarctic itineraries, will be announced closer to launch.

The ship is the first ocean vessel built by APT Travel Group. **MS**

Pictured: Quark's *Ultramarine*.

Tropicale opens

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has opened bookings for sailings aboard *Carnival Tropicale*, departing from Galveston from 15 Apr 2028.

The vessel is in her final stages of development.



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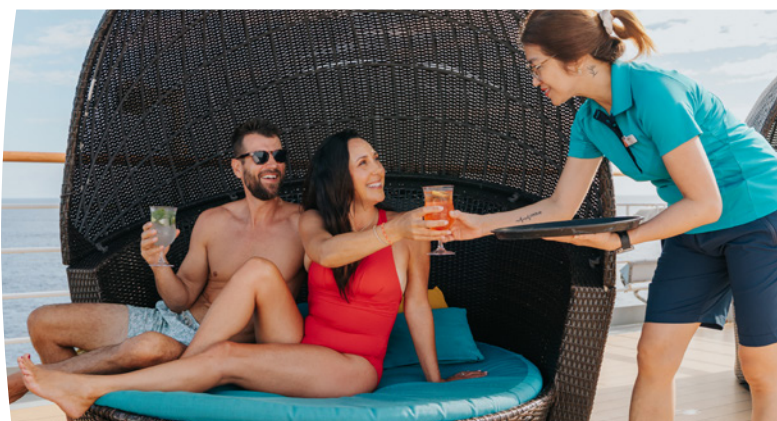
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Viking floats its second hydro vessel

VIKING has announced the float-out of its second hydrogen ship, *Viking Astrea* (pictured), which is set to debut next year.

The vessel recently entered the water for the first time, marking a major construction milestone for Viking's second ship capable of operating with zero emissions.

Astrea floated out at Fincantieri's Ancona shipyard, with the ritual beginning when a ceremonial cord was cut and water flowed into the ship's building dock.

The two-day process set the ship afloat before she was moved to a nearby outfitting dock for final construction and interior build-out.

Scheduled for delivery in May, *Astrea* will spend her inaugural season sailing itineraries in the Med and Northern Europe.

"The float-out of the *Viking Astrea* represents another



important milestone for Viking," president & chief executive officer Leah Talactac said.

"From the beginning, we have sought thoughtful ways to design more efficient ships, and the *Viking Astrea* is an important step forward in that ongoing effort."

The ship is being built with 499 staterooms that can accommodate almost 998 guests.

She is powered by a propulsion

system based partially on liquefied hydrogen and fuel cells, like her sister ship *Viking Libra*, the first hydrogen-based vessel, which is scheduled for delivery in Nov 2026.

Viking will be the first cruise line to launch a zero-emissions ship, ahead of brands like Hurtigruten (**CW** 26 Mar 2025) and Ponant (**CW** 30 Oct 2024), which are working on similar projects. *MS*

Winning in threes

CRUISE Traveller has launched three agent cruise incentive programs, with luxury prizes to Japan, Europe, and Canada.

In partnership with Mitsui Ocean Cruises, agents can win a spot on one of its 2027 sailings for two in a verandah suite by making eligible bookings with the cruise line between now and 30 Nov, for travel before 31 Dec 2027.

With Adventure Canada, agents can embark on the 16-night 'Out of the Northwest Passage' expedition, departing 10 Sep 2027, by booking any Adventure Canada product before 28 Feb 2027.

Agents can also travel to Europe with Viva Cruises when making a booking before 28 Feb 2027, with the chance to enjoy a seven-night sailing in a Ruby Deck cabin for two.

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IT'S rare to drink so much on a cruise that your drinking package is revoked, but that's what happened to one Carnival Cruise Line passenger, as she detailed on TikTok.

The woman, known online as @juicyloveboo, said she drunk so much tequila the crew members had to escort her back to her room and rescind access to her package.

In the video, the woman shows the crew also removed the handle to her balcony, to prevent any drunken accidents from happening.



Explora to South America



EXPLORA Journeys has announced new 2027-28 cruises spanning South America, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic islands, replacing the previously cancelled Middle East and Red Sea sailings.

The new itineraries aboard *Explora I* and *Explora V* will see the former ship trace South America on 10 journeys, visiting 37 destinations including 20 maiden ports.

Meanwhile, *Explora V* will launch her inaugural winter season with 21 cruises, becoming the latest line to introduce a 'quiet Mediterranean' season.

The ship will also visit North Africa's coastline and the islands of the Atlantic.

"With *Explora I*, we are bringing together the extraordinary contrasts of South America,

from the vibrancy of Brazil to the breathtaking landscapes of Patagonia," the cruise line's president Anna Nash explained.

"At the same time, *Explora V* will reveal a quieter, more atmospheric side of the Mediterranean in winter before continuing into the Atlantic Islands," she added.

"Both collections give guests the freedom to explore further, with every detail designed to create a seamless and enriching experience from one destination to the next."

The cancelled collection of Middle East and Red Sea sailings is the second such program the cruise line has replaced, after *Explora III's* planned Middle East deployment for winter 2026-27 was swapped to the Med instead (CW 26 Mar). MS

Book and a brew

CRUISE Traveller has launched its latest incentive, 'Book Today, Brew Tomorrow', giving agents the chance to win a Nespresso Vertuo Pop Capsule Coffee Machine.

To enter the contest, advisors must be a member of Cruise Traveller's new Agents' Facebook group (access it **HERE**) and book and deposit any of its boutique cruise experiences from now until the end of the month.

The more an agent books, the more chances they have to win, with every eligible booking going into the draw.

The new Facebook page offers agents exclusive offers and BDM updates, all designed to help them capitalise on the growth of luxury expedition and small ship cruising.



RIVER CRUISE CHANGES COURSE

Here is how the booming sector is entering a new era.

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