



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news

Paspaley brochure

AGENTS can now learn more about the experience guests can enjoy on the new Paspaley Pearl by Ponant expedition, with the maiden digital brochure now available.

The 36-page guide details *Paspaley Pearl's* explorations in East Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Kimberley, with itineraries ranging from eight to 13 days along with a rundown of life onboard.

The 30-guest ship will sail between ports including Bali, Dili, Broome, Wyndham, Darwin, Cairns and Madang, beginning in Jan 2025.

CLICK HERE to view the new Paspaley Pearl brochure.

Exclusive shorex for MSC Yacht Club

MSC Cruises is rolling out the red carpet with exclusive shore excursions for MSC Yacht Club guests, as the line's "ship-within-a-ship" concept celebrates its 15-year anniversary (**CW** 10 Jul).

The cruise line is introducing more than 90 shore exclusive excursions for Yacht Club guests.

The new experiences in the Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Northern Europe will offer Yacht Club guests priority disembarkation and private transfers, with more regions to come later in the year.

The small-group excursions will see guests try their hand at making their own personalised eau de cologne at one of oldest perfumeries in Southern France, indulge in authentic Greek cuisine on board a private catamaran in Santorini, relax in a secluded cabana in tropical Jamaica, or spend a day cruising in Cozumel



on a private yacht (**pictured**).

The experiences fall into a number of categories to suit all guest tastes and range from authentic culinary experiences, learning about local artistry, visiting architectural treasures, and getting involved in upscale adventure activities.

The excursions are now bookable online for Yacht Club guests in advance through the MSC contact centre or the booking travel advisor.

Guests on board can book through the MSC For Me app, the

Yacht Club concierge service, or the Shore Excursions desk.

"The new offering has come following customer feedback and a desire for a more exclusive experience for MSC Yacht Club guests," Head of Shore Excursions Marialuisa Iaccarino said.

"Guests will benefit from a seamless experience between the butlers' service on board and the excursion experts ashore, as well as having the opportunity to relax and fully immerse themselves into each destination's culture, cuisine and traditions." *MS*



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Asian cruise leaders celebrate success

CRUISE leaders are uniting in Asia, as they gather for this week's Asia Cruise Forum in South Korea.

Industry leaders are celebrating a powerful comeback in Asian markets, with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) outlining triple-digit growth shown in key regional countries.

CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz highlighted the remarkable resilience shown in Asian cruise markets in a state-of-the-industry address to the forum, a market which grew by 195% last year.

Key countries including Singapore, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam all recorded passenger levels above pre-pandemic levels, lifting the region's overall total to more than 2.3 million cruisers for the year.

Katz outlined the strength of the cruise sector globally in his



address, and the sustainability measures CLIA cruise lines are taking in pursuit of net-zero emissions by 2050.

"Asia is back as the world's third largest source region for cruise passengers, behind the US and Western Europe," Katz said.

"In fact, Singapore is now the seventh largest source country in the world."

Katz also moderated three panels focused on the importance of regional cooperation and collaboration between destinations and cruise lines. *MS*

Hornblower back after restructure

FORMER American Queen Voyages owner, Hornblower Group, says it has completed a major financial restructuring and now has the flexibility to support its long-term growth.

Investment firm Strategic Value Partners will remain as the majority shareholder, while a minority stake has been retained by Crestview Partners (*CW* 22 Feb),

The latter is also the sole owner of Journey Beyond, which was formerly a separate operating unit of Hornblower but has since exited this ownership structure.

"Today marks a new beginning for Hornblower," CEO Kevin Rabbitt said.

Hornblower closed American Queen Voyages prior to the restructure, with many of its vessels sold off.

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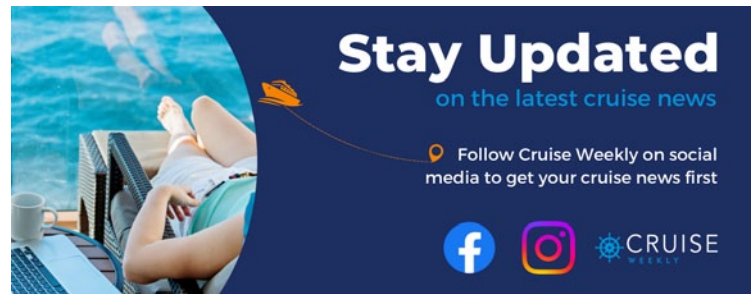
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VIVA Cruises has been showcasing its brand at Wimbledon this year - and it appears it may be good luck.

The cruise line has partnered with a number of players at Wimbledon to bring its river cruises to a larger audience.

"As the world's top tennis players compete at Wimbledon, we're proud to see some of them sporting our Viva Cruises brand on their polos," Chief Executive Officer Andrea Kruse said.

"Just as our river cruises offer a winning experience, we believe this partnership with players competing during Wimbledon is a match made in travel heaven - and hope to expand our partnership with them in the future."

It appears Viva may be 100% right about the effect of its sponsorship too.

Latvian top-10 female Jelena Ostapenko, who is one of the players wearing the Viva logo on her dress, charged through to the quarter-final of this year's tournament, one win from her best performance at the tournament.



Virtuoso cruise success

VIRTUOSO recently saw 50 of its 2024 'Cruise Icons' step aboard Windstar Cruises' 312-guest *Star Breeze* in French Polynesia for a hosted experience.

The Cruise Icons were welcomed to the 'Dreams of Tahiti' itinerary from 20-27 Jun at French Polynesia's Presidential Palace, with a private event with President Moetai Brotherson.

This sailing comes as 58% of Virtuoso's cruise community anticipates cruising will be the strongest tourism sector in 2024-2025, even surpassing land-only experiences (**CW** 18 Jun).

"Cruising is on the rise, and Virtuoso sits at the forefront of this movement with our industry-leading advisors and best-in-class cruise partners like Windstar," Senior Vice President of Global Member & Partner Sales Cory Hagopian said.

"We're seeing shifts driven by new vessels, destination immersion and expanded seasonality that are exciting for our clients, whether they're repeat cruisers or first-timers.

"The relationship between our Cruise Icons and partners ensures that we're constantly working together to elevate the guest experience and further cruising's appeal for savvy, luxury-minded travellers," he added.

Virtuoso's cruise bookings exceeding \$50,000 over the next 18 to 24 months have increased more than 100% compared to the same time frame last year.

Cruise categories expected to see the highest bookings include premium ocean at 34%, followed by luxury ocean at 27%, river at

22% and expedition at 15%.

Virtuoso advisors, and Cruise Icons in particular, are also seeing their services in high demand for the rising new-to-cruise segment, with 60% of surveyed advisors observing an increase in first-time cruisers, and 62% saying these newbies are coming to them for expert guidance and bookings.

Virtuoso advisors are observing other shifts, too, with 59% of surveyed advisors noticing a demographic transformation underway in the cruise industry.

More than a third of Virtuoso advisors are seeing an increase in bookings from Millennials and Gen Z, while 27% of advisors attribute the changing landscape to an increasing preference among families for cruising, and another 27% are seeing a rise in female solo cruisers.

The insights follow the announcement of Home Travel Company owner Robyn Sinfield as Australia's newly elected representative for Virtuoso's cruise committee earlier this month (**CW** 01 Jul). *MS*

Sail Croatia boost

SAIL Croatia is boosting its Elegance-class capacity from three ships to five for next year, with the cruise line to welcome the 36-berth *Romantic Star* to its fleet.

The ship was built in 2016 and features a spacious top deck complete with a jacuzzi.

Romantic Star also offers multiple lounge areas to relax and unwind, as well as plenty of sun loungers for guests to chill out.

The ship will operate 26 departures on a variety of itineraries between Split and Dubrovnik, including several wine cruises and World Heritage-themed departures.

Meanwhile, the 36-berth *Katarina* will move across from the Explorer-class to the Elegance-class ahead of 2025.

These changes bring Sail Croatia's Elegance-class fleet to 119 departures scheduled for next year, a 60% increase on this year.

"Our most luxurious ships operate on Elegance cruises," co-founder Helle Seuren said.



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