



Cruise Weekly today

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

Emerald Caribbean

EMERALD Cruises has introduced new Caribbean itineraries for winter 2024/25, which will see it reposition *Emerald Azzurra* away from Africa and the Red Sea.

The new routes, which will sail from Dec 2024 to Feb 2025, will explore less-travelled Caribbean locales, including Jost Van Dyke, Norman Island, Montserrat, and Antigua.

Azzurra will sail between St. Thomas or San Juan and St. John's, with cruises highlighted by overnight stays in St. Barths, and visits to Guadeloupe and Barbuda.

This expansion comes in response to strong demand for the Caribbean sailings aboard sister yacht *Emerald Sakara*, which have nearly reached full capacity for the upcoming season, while the cruise line has also adjusted its 2024/2025 Safari and Seychelles operations to prioritise guest safety.

"Our decision to increase our Caribbean presence reflects the strong guest interest in this region and aligns with changes in the Red Sea conditions," Scenic Group Managing Director United States Ken Muskat said.

"This adjustment not only enhances our offerings in highly sought-after destinations but ensures guests' safety and satisfaction.

"*Azzurra's* new schedule has been meticulously crafted to access unique ports that larger vessels simply cannot reach, providing exclusive and intimate exploration for all on board," he added.

Cruise's destination focus

DESTINATION stewardship will play a large part in the future of the Australian cruise industry, according to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Managing Director Joel Katz.

The country's seniormost cruise executive told attendees at Ecotourism Australia's Global Sustainable Tourism Summit yesterday the future of sustainable cruising is the sector continuing to build relationships with the ports it sails to.

"It's about continuing to build those relationships and those collaborations because of those long lead times," Katz told the Summit's 'How cruising can be sustainable' panel.

The CLIA MD said destinations are offered a fantastic opportunity by the cruise sector to plan ahead, and funnel in the desired amount of tourists.

"For destinations, you should actually look at cruise as the ultimate form of managed tourism, because you know so far in advance that the ships are coming or when they want to come, that you can actually plan around it, [and] put limitations in place to manage it," Katz said.

Kangaroo Island Tourism Alliance Regional Tourism Manager Megan Harvie said the South Australian destination is currently considering its own cruise industry, and how it wants the sector to contribute to its overall visitor strategy.

"We're about to go into destination management planning, which will help us... understand what types of ships we really want, what carrying capacity is at certain times of the year, what infrastructure we really need to make it successful sector for us," she pondered.

"We're right at the beginning, but I think destinations can definitely work better with cruise lines on that social licence part, and really partner with them and



work out their ESG [values] and how a destination [can] match that," she said.

"What can we both offer each other? It has to be more than just coming here and leaving a bit of money...there's got to be more than that."

Harvie admitted the Kangaroo Island local community does not currently have a positive view of the cruise industry, and although the destination draws up to \$30m from the industry per year, "sometimes that's not enough".

"I think we need to think about the social licence," she offered.

"Tourism overall needs to think about their social impact, but especially cruise because they do come in and say, 'hey, we're trying to help a destination', but potentially it might need to be a little bit more.

"Some of those destinations are small, and don't have great resources or great infrastructure to help them get to where they need to go." MS

Travel24 growing

THE hottest topic in business has made it on to the Travel24 program with a massive spin.

AI will be tackled in a way not yet seen at a travel and tourism conference by going way beyond the "how to use ChatGPT" mindset.

Founder of Airstack AI Tom Pitney will reveal how to create an AI strategy and share steps to build out a plan.

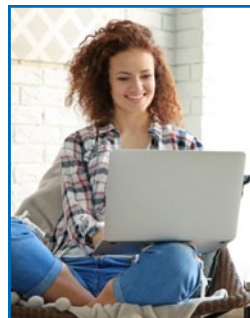
Pitney is the brains behind well-known youth title *Punkee*, and is an expert in AI.

MEANWHILE, the third advisor to take part in the panel moderated by Australian Travel Industry Association Chief Executive Officer Dean Long, 'Change Agents: The Challenges And Opportunities For Travel Advisors', has been revealed, with Emily Kadinski, owner of itravel Carlingford, joining the discussion.

Kadinski joins a group which already includes Helloworld's Yohan Siva and TravelManagers' Louise McCarthy (**CW** 29 May).

Also confirmed to speak is CVFR Group's Ram Chhabra, Hardhat's Dan Monheit, and global keynote speaker, DEI expert Azure Antoinette.

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Ponant adds three Aussie voyages

PONANT has shared three new local luxury expeditions for 2024 and 2025, featuring itineraries discovering the Great Australian Bight, the gastronomic delights of Tasmania, and WA.

'Along Australia's South Coast', which cruises aboard *Le Jacques-Cartier* from Fremantle to Hobart, travels for 13 nights to explore the country's southern shores and the Great Australian Bight.

The cruise departs 10 Dec 2024, venturing down the Western Australian coast to Albany and Esperance before delving into the Recherche Archipelago.

Passengers will then indulge in seafood in Port Lincoln, savour McLaren Vale's wines, King Island's culinary treasures, and the Tamar Valley's vineyards.

Jacques-Cartier will cruise the 'Food, Wine, & Yacht Race in Tasmania' voyage, round tripping from Hobart over Christmas and



New Year.

The 10-night cruise departs 23 Dec 2024, and delves into Maria Island's wildlife sanctuaries and the Tasman Peninsula.

The cruise will call on King Island (pictured), the Tamar Valley, and Promise Bay, while passengers will also explore Stanley Island's Yindayin rock shelter, which is adorned with historic rock art.

The journey concludes in

Hobart, where passengers will take in the end of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, as well as Taste of Tasmania, the country's largest food & wine festival.

Ponant will also sail an 'Australia's West Coast Odyssey' cruise aboard *Le Soleal*, from Broome to Fremantle, departing 11 Aug.

The 10-night cruise will see passengers marvel at 40,000-year-old rock art in Murujuga National Park, dive into the history and wildlife of the Montebello Islands Marine Park, and explore the vibrant coral reefs of the Ningaloo Coast.

Passengers will also discover Shark Bay and the Abrolhos Marine National Park, home to coral reefs and seabird colonies.

The journey concludes in Jurien Bay Marine Park, where passengers will encounter rare Australian sea lions. *MS*

True North return

ADVENTURE cruise line True North is returning to the Rowley Shoals with its ship *True North II*.

A limited number of staterooms have become available on True North's Coast & Coral itineraries from Aug, which incorporates the Rowley Shoals as well as the Kimberley in Western Australia.

The itinerary features scenic flights over the Buccaneer Archipelago and Montgomery Reef, natural waterfall showers on the bow at Kings Cascade, early morning birdwatching in the Hunter River, and adventures up the Prince Regent River.

True North II will then cruise overnight to the Rowley Shoals, with guests waking up to crystal waters and snorkelling, diving and swimming, and more.

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Taylor to Riviera

RIVIERA Travel River Cruises has appointed Steven Taylor as International Sales Manager to drive expansion in Australia.

The new dedicated sales manager reinforces Riviera Travel's commitment to the Australian market, and the local travel advisor network

Taylor brings a wealth of experience in the cruise industry, with his previous roles as Saga Travel's Head of Retail and P&O Cruises UK's Business Manager Partnership Development, where he was responsible for building new distribution channels.

He will work closely with Travel the World, the cruise line's Australian sales distribution partner, to grow brand awareness, while the GSA will continue to offer Aussie advisors training and marketing support.

Discovery yachts to hit the rivers

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has launched its 2026 Worldwide Discovery Collection, which spans departures from Oct 2025 through Mar 2027.

The new discovery yacht programs will see the vessels visit some of the world's most iconic rivers for the first time, including the Guadalquivir in Spain, the Seine in France, and the Thames in the United Kingdom.

Guests are offered more than 160 itineraries across 50 countries, with highlights including witnessing a solar eclipse in Greenland and Iceland, and crossing the Panama Canal.

Passengers will also celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States' Declaration of Independence, with visits to the Delaware, York and Cape Fear rivers in America.

"For those looking to immerse themselves in history...*Scenic*



Eclipse (pictured) will sail the Americas in 2026, marking the country's 250th anniversary of independence," Vice President Ocean Deployment Claudius Docekal said.

"One of her voyages, which will originate from New York City, will visit sites from the nation's founding in the north, to the

battlefields of the Civil War in the south, in a truly one-of-a-kind voyage," he added.

The yachts will also visit Southern France during the Monaco Grand Prix and Cannes Film Festival.

Most of the cruises are designed to be combined, allowing for voyages of over 60 nights. *MS*

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PORThOLE

ALASKA'S cruise season has just begun, and passengers visiting the state may be lucky enough to witness an odd natural phenomenon currently taking place.

A number of Alaska's Arctic rivers have turned orange, which experts believe is due to thawing permafrost.

It may or may not be a welcome sight, depending on your viewpoint, with many cruisers to Alaska visiting the state for its crystal-blue waters.

Unfortunately for those seeking this out, those same rivers now look like they have orange juice running down them (pictured).



Princess lassoes partnership



PRINCESS Cruises has been named the official cruise line partner of the Academy of Country Music (ACM), with the brand's ships to feature performances from emerging stars of the genre.

The partnership kicked off last month at the 59th ACM Awards Show, hosted by 'the Queen of Country', Reba McEntire, and saw artists and nominees interviewed live from the Princess Stage on the red carpet.

The cruise line will also be the presenting sponsor for the recently introduced 'ACM Live from the Red Barrel Lounge' series, which will take place at the Academy's Headquarters in Nashville later this year.

The series will feature exclusive performances introducing viewers to new and emerging country artists, who will be welcomed on board select future voyages.

"Princess is incredibly proud to partner with the ACM and to showcase the next big country stars," the cruise line's President John Padgett said.

"Country music has a special place in the hearts of many of our guests, and this partnership allows us to bring unparalleled experiences on board to combine that love for cruising and country music in a unique and memorable way," he added.

Pictured: country duo Maddie & Tae interviewed live from the Princess Stage.

Croisi all-inclusive

CROISIEUROPE has introduced its all-inclusive offering on Mekong cruises, with savings of up to €500 (A\$817) on select departures.

The new offering will be available from the start of this coming Mekong season in Aug, with all sailings between Cambodia and Vietnam to be all-inclusive, with drinks included in the fare.

This brings the Mekong cruises in line with the rest of CroisiEurope's European and worldwide cruises, which already include beverages.

CroisiEurope is also offering savings of €500 per person plus included excursions on all Mekong departures in Aug and Sep.

Travellers can choose from a number of CroisiEurope itineraries, including an 11-day cruise between Siem Reap and Ho Chi Minh City with calls in Krong Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Tralach, Koh Chen, Phnom Penh, Chau Doc, Sa Dec, Vinh Long, Cai Be, and My Tho, with highlights including navigating the Chao Gao canal.



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