



Cruise Weekly today

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

Agent appreciation

SILVERSEA has launched its inaugural Travel Advisor Appreciation Month with a new incentive running for the month of May.

The luxury line has 50 Visa gift cards up for grabs, each valued at \$150, with a chance to win one available for every new booking made by 31 May.

Entries are of equal value for each draw irrespective of booking value, and each agent can only win once.

Agents can also enjoy their own Silversea voyage with the line's exclusive agent rates starting from \$245 per day.

CLICK HERE for more details on the new promotion.

HX combating Galapagos "mass tourism"

EXCLUSIVE

HX IS pushing back against increasing cruise capacity limits in the Galapagos Islands (pictured), as it attempts to avoid "mass tourism" to the destination.

The Ecuadorian government has quizzed cruise lines operating in the Galapagos whether they want allowance for more passengers, with 69 vessels currently holding a license, for a total of 1,670 pax.

However, Ramiro Tomala, Expedition Leader for HX's *Santa Cruz II* vessel, has hit out at the idea to allow hundreds or even thousands of extra visitors.

"We want guests, but we don't want mass tourism, we're completely against that," he told *Cruise Weekly* on board *Santa Cruz II* late last week.

"The Ecuadorian government says 'why don't you want another 200,000 tourists'...they always push but we don't want to do it



because we don't want to have mass tourism."

The Galapagos' strict capacity limitations usually allow just one ship to anchor in one destination at a time, meaning passengers usually have each stop to themselves during the call.

Many of *Santa Cruz II*'s passengers have nominated this reason as one of the keys to their satisfaction with their voyage.

Although this exclusivity raises the lead-in price for a Galapagos trip, Tomala believes this is

beneficial for the destination.

Tomala said HX recently doubled the entry tax from \$100 to \$200 in response to tourist demand spiking by over 100,000 compared to pre-pandemic.

"One of the reasons why Galapagos is so expensive is on purpose...the flights are so expensive because we don't want everybody to come, we don't want people to come that just want to go to a beach, they want to go drink and just get a suntan," he said. *MS*

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Envoyage keen to cruise

CRUISING is an important part of the Envoyage ecosystem, shared Envoyage GM AU, Nick Queale, at Worldwide 2024 late last week.

The recently launched global Envoyage brand will officially go live in Australia next month, and cruise will be an important part of its ecosystem, bringing cruise to market, and providing members with cruise deals.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* over the weekend, Queale explained that Envoyage provides members with tools and support in the cruise space, including through Flight Centre Travel Group's CruiseHQ marketplace.

"Cruise is a very complex market, it's a very unique skillset," he shared.

"So we consider 'how do we give them the tools to sell cruise, and build the cruise demographic in their business' - there are tools

that are coming through Flight Centre, and there's the deals that we put on the table."

MEANWHILE, Envoyage cruise partners were front-and-centre at last week's inaugural Worldwide 2024 conference in Santiago, Chile, as 13 cruise lines supported and attended the event. *AP*

Overboard on P&O

A SEARCH continues for a person who went overboard P&O Cruises' *Pacific Adventure* off the coast of Sydney today.

The alarm was raised at 4am this morning, with P&O Cruises' onboard teams caring for the person's family.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Joint Rescue Centre is coordinating the effort.

Pacific Adventure's arrival today into White Bay has been delayed as a result.

HAL's new contest

SUNRISE viewers will have the chance to win an Alaskan CruiseTour experience with Holland America Line in a new contest launched this week.

The major prize is an 11-day Yukon + Denali Cruise Tour from Anchorage to Vancouver which includes two nights at McKinley Chalet Resort and an *MS Koningsdam* Verandah stateroom, plus specialty dining and onboard credit.

Plan with Emerald

EMERALD Cruises has launched its 2024-27 Cruise Planner, which can now be ordered from TIFS.

The planner features details on 75 global itineraries across the Emerald fleet including its new luxury yacht, *Emerald Kaia*, (*CW* 10 Apr), with increased capacity in the Mediterranean.



On location in Ecuador

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of HX, which is hosting us aboard *Santa Cruz II* this week on a cruise around the Galapagos Islands.

TODAY is our final day aboard HX's *Santa Cruz II*, and it is jam-packed with the best of what HX's Galapagos Islands program has to offer.

Guests will have the opportunity to snorkel twice tomorrow during the ship's call at Floreana Island.

There will also be two guided hikes - one to Post Office Bay, named for a stampless "post office" in a barrel where visitors can take letters to deliver; and one to a prominent local flamingo breeding location.

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CruiseHQ tests positive

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) newest B2B marketplace CruiseHQ has begun with outstanding results from beta testers in its first month.

CruiseHQ's launch phase, which was exclusively revealed by *Cruise Weekly* last month (*CW* 17 Apr), saw it engage with travel agency partners across FCTG networks, which included Cruiseabout, Travel Associates, and Envoyage independent stores, to form a test group of advisors, all generating excellent initial feedback.

The group gave CruiseHQ an average score of 9.2 out of 10, with advisors rating highly both the booking platform's content and ease of booking flow.

Almost all respondents (93%) expressed extreme likelihood to recommend the platform to their colleagues, and all agencies surveyed rated CruiseHQ as the premier wholesale cruise booking platform in the market.

They nominated the ease of



booking, rich content, and the ability to confirm reservations online 24/7 as the most important drivers for their bookings.

"Since our debut, our exclusive packages, group bookings, and back-to-back sailings have driven exceptional inquiry," said CruiseHQ Business Development Manager, Viktoriya Shliazhko.

"We have seen demand for Europe, the US, the Caribbean, Alaska, Japan, and bucket-list polar itineraries.

"In fact, 95% of our bookings to date are international packages and sailings." *MS*

Pictured: Shliazhko with Carnival Cruise Line National Sales Manager, Mark Richards, and Senior Director Sales & Marketing, Anton Loeb.

Quest acquisition

PINNACLE Travel Group has confirmed it has acquired and integrated the luxury Kimberley Quest cruise brand in an off-market transaction.

Kimberley Quest sails four- to 21 night expeditions in the northwest with one vessel of the same name, catering to 18 travellers and six crew.

Pinnacle Director, Luke Crispin, said there won't be any operational changes to the business post-acquisition.

WA Tourism Minister, Rita Saffioti, said the government was "all about supporting local jobs and businesses, so it's fantastic knowing that a WA operator has taken over the well-established Kimberley Quest and will further support dozens of local jobs."

HAL clarification

CRUISE Weekly is clarifying Holland America Line (HAL) is not offering its glacier guarantee to Australian pax.

The 'Glacier Guarantee' reported in Fri's *Cruise Weekly* is not currently being offered in this market.



HX PASSENGERS on this week's cruise in the Galapagos Islands enjoyed a visit one of the world's most unique post offices on Floreana Island.

Post Office Bay, which is located on the north coast of the island, is the site of a wooden barrel erected by whalers in the 19th century.

Visitors to the Bay leave behind letters and postcards without a stamp, which future guests can sort through and hand-deliver to recipients located in their own country.

Cruise Weekly picked up one postcard intended for New South Wales (**pictured**), but as it is addressed to a location eight hours from our office, it may have to be stamped and dealt with by Australia Post.



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