

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Cruise Lines International Association**.

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Australian cruise on show at ATE

AUSTRALIAN cruise destinations are in the spotlight this week at the tourism industry's largest business-to-business event.

The country's cruise sector has been connecting with travel industry representatives from around the world at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Brisbane, which began on the weekend, and will run through Thu.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has joined with the Australian Cruise Association (ACA), who are among 1,600 local representatives showcasing the country to more than 700 global buyers from across 30 nations.

CLIA and the ACA are promoting the hundreds of choices international visitors have to explore Australia by sea, taking advantage of a diverse range of ships, iconic destinations, and



more than 30,000km of coastline.

Joel Katz, CLIA Managing Director, and ACA Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel, are hosting a full schedule of appointments at a co-branded booth (**pictured**), representing their combined memberships of cruise lines, ports, destinations, tourism operators, travel advisors and other cruise sector stakeholders.

Passenger numbers are at record levels worldwide, Katz noted, and the Australian

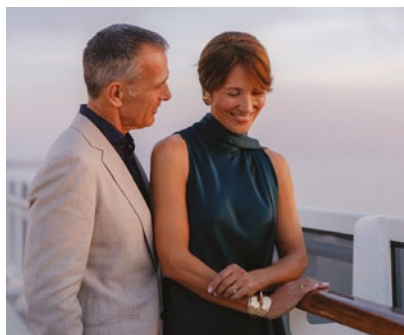
cruise community is focused on attracting more of them.

"Cruising is an incredibly important part of Australia's tourism industry, generating \$8.43 billion a year for the national economy and supporting more than 26,000 full-time jobs," he said.

"If international cruise passengers were a country, they would represent one of Australia's top five tourism markets, so we need to foster this key part of our tourism portfolio."

Abel added the worldwide growth in demand for cruising presented huge opportunities for a nation defined by its coasts.

"Australia is a land of incredible coastal destinations, so cruising is a natural opportunity for international visitors who want to connect our gateway cities and natural environment by sea," enthused Abel. *MS*





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New cruise recruit

UNFORGETTABLE Croatia has expanded its Australian team, as local bookings for the small ship cruise line soar (**CW** 18 Mar).

Carmela Pascuzzi has joined Aurore Bertomeu as a European Travel Specialist in the Australian office, which opened in Melbourne last year in response to growing demand Down Under.

Pascuzzi comes to the role with more than 20 years' experience in the travel industry across Qantas Holidays, Qantas Business Travel, All Abroad Travel, Bentours, Wedding Destinations, Mirabella Travel, and Flight Centre.

The duo will work alongside Business Development Manager Sarah Whitty, who has been representing Unforgettable Croatia in Australia for the past seven years at The Hotel Connection.

"I'm so excited about the opportunity to spend my days immersed in Croatia...I'm passionate about travel and love working with different cultures," Pascuzzi said.

"It is such a beautiful part of the world and a place that is very appealing to Australians, so I am delighted to be joining the Unforgettable Croatia team to help more people experience the best of this region on a small ship cruise."

PHT new cruise portal



PHIL Hoffmann Travel (PHT) is set to launch a cruise booking portal, as part of a national push.

The South Australia-based travel agency is launching its online booking portal later this week, *The Advertiser* reports.

The new tool will aggregate voyages from all the major cruise lines, and will be supported by PHT's team of agents.

Managing Director Peter Williams said the company will promote the new portal at travel expos and roadshows across Australia later this year.

"We do have national ambitions and to fish in a larger pond," Williams told *The Advertiser*, describing the portal as a "one-stop shop".

Williams added Helloworld's investment and support - following its acquisition of 40% of the company in 2023 - had enabled it to fast-track its expansion plans and invest in key growth areas.

PHT was a finalist in the Cruise

Lines International Association's Agency of the Year - Multi-Location category earlier this year (**CW** 16 Jan). *MS*

Flora in bloom

CONSTRUCTION of Adora Cruises' *Adora Flora City* has reached float-out stage, as China's second domestically built cruise vessel moves closer to her scheduled delivery next year.

A float-out ceremony was held last week, as reported by state-run daily newspaper *China Daily* has reported.

Flora City will now undergo outfitting procedures and mooring tests.

Flora City follows on from *Adora Magic City*, which sailed her maiden voyage last year (**CW** 02 Jan 2024), as the first domestically built ship to emerge from China State Shipbuilding Corp.

Aqua's big splash

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's all-new *Norwegian Aqua* has debuted from her new home port of Port Canaveral.

Aqua will now sail on seven-day Caribbean voyages through to Aug.

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TRAVELLERS will soon be able to take their summer holidays to the next level, at least in Wales, which will be home to the world's first underwater museum.

Visitors as young as 10 will be able to dive in and explore the ruins of the former Vivian Quarry in Gwynedd, which is now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The site has been submerged underwater for the last 20 years, with old mining buildings, tools and even a circular blast shelter hidden beneath 19 metres of water.

In fact, a new technology developed by XPLO Group means that anyone, including complete beginners, will be able to explore the museum with no prior scuba training after a 10-minute safety briefing.

"Our collaboration [with XPLO Group] has led to the commercialisation of a unique underwater gaming program and innovative technology," Scuba Scape, the operators of the upcoming diving centre, told local media in Wales.

The site will also host an underwater escape room, allowing divers to participate in interactive games as they tour the remains of the quarry.

Bookings are expected to open soon on Scuba Scape's website, with tickets priced at £73.36 (A\$153.31).

Xcel dials up the romance



CELEBRITY Cruises has announced a new dining concept to enhance couples' getaways, with the line to introduce an al fresco restaurant, Bora, on board new ship *Celebrity Xcel*.

Offering a seafood-focused menu, the rooftop restaurant will transition from day to night, offering a lively brunch or an intimate dinner.

Bora will serve Mediterranean-inspired classics by day, like shakshuka eggs with coriander, avocado and sourdough toast, and a croissant eggs benedict with lemon-scented salmon gravlax, ricotta spread and hollandaise sauce, alongside brunch favourites such as French toast.

Couples dining at Bora in the evening will enjoy a backdrop of Greek ballads and Italian love songs while savouring chef-led tableside dining experiences, such as seared branzino and garlic aioli.

After dinner, couples can continue their date night with *Xcel's* nightlife offerings, such as two new interactive shows in The Club, multiple dance parties, or a candlelit concert experience.

"*Celebrity Xcel* will be [guests'] happy place with new dining

options and all-new entertainment and activities creating endless opportunities to 'Date Night, All Day Long,'" Celebrity Chief Marketing and Product Officer Michael Scheiner said.

"These elevated new experiences will invite guests to discover something new while creating shared memories." JM

Explora serves up

EXPLORA Journeys has become a main sponsor of the Geneva Open for 2025.

The brand will take centre stage at the tennis tournament from 17-24 May.

"We are delighted to partner with the Gonet Geneva Open, a tournament that shares our commitment to excellence and heritage," Explora President Anna Nash said.

"Teamwork is at the heart of everything we do - both at sea and ashore...this partnership reflects our shared values and our connection to Geneva."

World number 4 Taylor Fritz will headline the tournament, as he seeks his first title in Geneva, while former world number 2 Casper Ruud will return to defend his crown.



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