

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news.

Patriot sets sail

AMERICAN Cruise Lines is this week kicking off its biggest New England season yet, featuring nine itineraries and five small ships.

On 21 Jun, the brand-new *American Patriot* will sail round trip from Boston on the 15-day 'Grand New England' cruise, visiting Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, Plymouth, and more.

Other offerings include the 'Hudson River Summer Classic' and 'Maine Coast and Harbors' itineraries - more **HERE**.

Scenic "back to the future"



SCENIC Group is heading "back to the future" with its product, as demand for land touring rises, and the company's two brands, Scenic and Emerald, pursue greater synergies.

Aussie booking demand continues to grow, as Scenic continues its heavy investment in the cruise sector.

"As a group now, we are definitely looking at where can we complement each other," Emerald Director Sales & Marketing Angus Crichton said.

"We've got Scenic, your ultra-luxury, all-inclusive brand, and then where does Emerald fit in, where has it evolved to fit into the Scenic group jigsaw?"

Crichton told **CW** travellers frequently disembark their cruise seeking more land exploration.

The trend is particularly prevalent in Europe, Crichton noted, where passengers would seek out another tour operator if there is no Scenic and Emerald option available.

"How do we make this a one-stop-shop, full service, and make sure that our land journeys can be linked to all our cruising?" Crichton considered.

One example is Scenic's Grand Journeys (**CW** 08 May) - product which was not previously

packaged, and is now being sold as one itinerary.

These include voyages of almost 90 days in length, visiting bucket-list destinations such as Antarctica and Patagonia.

The result has been larger receipts and a larger booking curve, Scenic Group GM Sales & Marketing Anthony Laver said.

"What we didn't expect is that '25 would be even stronger than '24, and the forward bookings that we were getting back-to-back," he told **Cruise Weekly**.

Laver said one receipt now often metastasises as a cruise and a land tour, or a land tour with a back-to-back cruise.

"We can see the demand curve is pushed into '26 and '27."

Scenic last year also relaunched its Evergreen Tours product as 'Emerald Tours' (**CW** 22 Mar 2024), effectively folding the legacy brand into its newer, faster-growing sister brand.

This also helped cut down on the number of brands Scenic Group was operating.

"We are now not activating the Evergreen brand - it has been put on ice," Laver confirmed.

"It tended to cater to a much more mature audience and it sort of never really evolved as a younger cohort." *MS*

Princess Singapore

PRINCESS Cruises will home port two ships in Singapore for the second time, with *Sapphire Princess* joining *Diamond Princess* from the island country for 2026-27.

Sapphire will offer 18 itineraries from Singapore, including round-trip Southeast Asia and Far East sailings and special holiday cruises, many including late-night stays in destinations like Ha Long Bay, Bangkok, and Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, *Diamond* will operate 11 sailings from Nov 2026 to Mar 2027.

She will offer a variety of options from 14- to 31-days via Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, plus themed cruises.



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Tailored for groups

EUROPEAN Waterways has launched Active Experience Cruises to give families and groups of friends the flexibility to tailor their itinerary.

Available as private charters, the cruises can be curated entirely around the groups' interests, lifestyles, and preferences, with the ability to choose from a range of active excursions, while enjoying luxury accommodation on board the line's hotel barge.

Guests can select experiences like cycling or hiking through vineyard trails; kayaking or paddleboarding on rivers and lagoons; truffle hunting, wine tasting, market foraging, and cooking classes; and, depending on the region, quad biking, archery, falconry, or hot air ballooning.

There are also several activities to choose from on board the barge, including a themed murder mystery evening and yoga on deck or wellness treatments arranged on request.

European Waterways' hotel barge accommodates between eight to 20 guests, and can access off-the-beaten-path destinations not reached by large vessels.

Guests will enjoy all-inclusive luxury, including seasonal and locally sourced meals, open bar, a private guide, transfers and excursions.

Seabourn's new course



CRUISE travellers will be able to more deeply connect with the destinations they visit as part of an expanded culinary program on board Seabourn Cruise Line.

The new dining structure will see cuisine inspired by the world's ports added to menus, with locally sourced produce at the program's core.

Headline dishes will include wild-caught Alaskan salmon or condiments such as honey sourced from a nearby apiary.

Seafood in general will play a larger role in new destination menus, with onboard experiences such as hands-on preparation activities and off-ship excursions such as oyster shucking in Canada or lobster tastings in Maine.

"After travelling across the fleet and listening closely to our guests, onboard teams, and travel partners, we're exploring even more ways to spotlight regional flavours and locally sourced ingredients, with freshness and

flavour at the heart of every dish," President Mark Tamis said.

"When it comes to sourcing locally, we believe more is more, and there's more to come."

Pax can also get more involved in the line's sourcing of fresh and local ingredients in an expanded 'Shopping with the Chef' program, where guests head to local markets to learn more about local produce and buy ingredients for meals on board.

New ports where guests can go shopping with the Head Chef include Ho Chi Minh City, Penang, Nagasaki, and Quebec City, with late-night market visits also on offer in Bangkok and Kanazawa.

Seabourn will introduce completely revised dinner menus at its onboard restaurants, with 24 new entrees and mains inspired by local cuisines.

New dishes include marinated diver scallops, seared seabass, and white and dark chocolate peanut butter mousse. *ML*

Aqua heads south

SEVEN-NIGHT itineraries to South Raja Ampat in Indonesia will be offered by Aqua Expeditions, beginning in Dec.

The expansion to the south of the Indonesian archipelago comes on the back of a successful season in North Raja Ampat, with the 60-metre *Aqua Blu* to sail in the region until Feb.

The ship is the first long-range ocean yacht to be based year-round in Eastern Indonesia, with itineraries to sail round-trip from the Sorong in Southwest Papua.

The new South Raja Ampat trips will venture into the Misool Marine Reserve, taking travellers to renowned dive sites such as Fibiacet, the Blue Water Mangroves and the forests of Kapatcol.

Viking weekly deal

VIKING'S deal of the week offers a saving of up to \$10,800 per couple on Viking's 'Komodo & the Australian Coast' voyage.

The cruise sails from Bali to Sydney or vice versa, and is priced from \$7,795 per person in a veranda stateroom.

Passengers will encounter Komodo dragons, jumping crocodiles, and more.

Savings are available on select cruises in Nov - **CLICK HERE** for more information.

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UBER is all about getting people between A and B - any way it can - and going by car is so last year.

So if you're holidaying on Italy's Amalfi Coast and open the Uber app, you now have the option of booking two new services - helicopter and boat - to explore the scenic hotspot.

Unlike Uber's traditional car service though, Uber Boat is not available on-demand but instead operates as a weekend guided cruise for up to 12 people to explore the coast.

Departing from Sorrento Marina, the Uber Boat experience is a four-hour cruise along the coast in a stylish Gozzo 35 boat, complete with a skipper and included beverages.

If you want to see more of the islands though, consider booking the Uber Copter for a luxury transfer from Sorrento to Capri - which certainly beats the queues for the ferry.

Cruise team steps it up



UNFORGETTABLE Croatia's Australian office recently joined its global counterparts to take part in the company's annual healthy lifestyle challenge.

Melbourne-based European Travel Specialist Aurore Bertomeu (**pictured**) was one of the 80% of local staff to take part in the six-week challenge, which included regular targets and weekly tasks.

The fitness test included monitoring of steps taken along with regular exercise programs.

Collectively, over the course of the health initiative, Unforgettable's team walked 30 million steps, or 20,000km, which is farther than the distance between Australia and Croatia.

In the final week, staff were

challenged to work one vegan meal per day into their diets.

"Every year, the annual fitness challenge brings us together," said Bertomeu, one of the line's two European Travel Specialists, who was recently joined by a new recruit in Carmela Pascuzzi (**CW** 29 Apr) to help field ongoing growth in booking volumes.

"We work all over the world so it's a great way to get to know each other and go from being names and faces on a screen to teammates and friendly rivals.

"Over the course of the challenge, we share selfies, workout fails, words of encouragement, and an endless stream of juice and salad bowl snaps," Bertomeu said. **ML**



Inbound cruising growth

ONE of the highlights of CLIA's recent *Source Market Report* for Australia is the excellent growth it shows in international visitors.

While the number of Aussies cruising was up 5.9% in 2024, the number of overseas visitors to our region was up even more, by 14%.

A total of 247,000 passengers came to sail in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific last year, making cruising one of this region's biggest sources of inbound tourism.

International visitor spending makes up a significant part of cruising's \$8.4 billion annual contribution to the Australian economy, so we need to support & enhance this important sector.

CLIA and our cruise lines are closely engaged with governments across this region to achieve better settings to support cruise tourism.

While cruising remains popular, regulatory complexities and increasing fees threaten to make Australia uncompetitive.

This impacts deployment in our local region, which ultimately means ships and their guests may head to other destinations.

Government advocacy is an important part of CLIA's work.

With your backing, we have gained good support over recent times, and we will continue to strive for a better environment for cruising into the future.



Ecotours to Alaska

SMALL group touring brand Gondwana Ecotours has launched a new nine-day adventure around Southeast Alaska onboard a 20-pax yacht.

The 'Alaska Whales, Waterfalls & Yacht Adventure' sees travellers navigate the narrow Fjords Terror and the Windham Bay Wilderness Area along with wildlife encounters.



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