

Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 28th Sep 2023



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House of cruise growth revealed

THE House of Travel Group has announced a newly created joint Cruise Product and Wholesale team, as part of a new plan to capitalise on the surging demand for cruise around the globe.

Jeff Leckey, who has worked for the group for six years as Cruise General Manager, will head up the new team in the role of General Manager Cruise - Australasia.

TravelManagers' Cruise Product Manager, Lia Malone, is also joining the new team.

"There is massive potential for growth and we're excited to enter the next phase in building our cruise business," House of Travel Australia Chief Executive Joe Araullo shared - for more details on the big news, see today's **CW**.

To Infinity and beyond

FLIGHT Centre is resurrecting its wholesale brand Infinity Holidays, which was previously folded into a Product Excellence Hub during a restructure of the business in 2020 (**TD** 20 Aug 2020).

Announced during a cocktail function in Sydney last night, The Travel Junction (TTJ) will be rebranded to make way for the big Infinity comeback, which Infinity Holidays GM James Whiting said would herald the "continued evolution to a full-service multiple award-winning" wholesale proposition.

"We know our agents are time-poor, their clients expect more support...and we want to support them," Whiting observed.

"The industry needs a proficient, full-service wholesale offering, so when looking to rebrand and take TTJ to the next level, it made sense to bring back a brand the industry knows and loves in Infinity Holidays."

NTIA solo finalists

MORE NTIA finalists have been revealed, with the cream of the crop in the Individual Categories announced by the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) this morning.

In general the top five nominees proceeded to the finalist stage, based on overall scores from the assessors, ATIA noted, however in some categories where there have been tied scores, up to nine finalists have been named.

Among the esteemed list of worthy nominees were six people in the running for Rookie of the Year, which will see Cherie Manson from HelloWorld Travel Albury, David O'Shea from RAA Travel, Georgia Walk from HelloWorld Travel Mackay, Jarrod Sinclair from InsideJapan Tours, Kyle Single, from CTM and Rachael McSorley from Global Journeys battle it out at the awards night in Nov.

To read the full list of individual finalists, read **HERE**.



Commissions of up to 15%, as well as exclusive rates on over 50,000 products are on offer under the new Infinity Holidays umbrella, with more exclusive deals and developments flagged for the coming months.

As part of the rebirth of its wholesale brand, Flight Centre also revealed that a hand-picked global range of hotel inventory called Atlas is also launching to the market under Infinity, featuring "best-in-class rates and availability, exclusive product inclusions, and exceptional in-destination service".

Advisors selling the Atlas range will earn an extra 1% commission until the end of the year as part of a special launch promotion.

Flight Centre CEO Graham Turner said the move to return Infinity allows the travel trade to adapt to growing demands.

"The travel industry is in a period of evolution like nothing we have seen in recent times... and Infinity Holidays will be the go-to partner of the global travel trade, with simple supply solutions that power endless growth and unbreakable partnerships," Turner said.

Agents already partnered with TTJ can expect to see the Infinity Holidays brand roll out across the partner channels and HELiO in coming weeks - register as a new partner at infinityholidays.com/register. **AB**

Berlin is beckoning

VISITBERLIN is highlighting the city's visitor appeal, including its vibrant nightlife, galleries, cuisine, music and fashion, as well as upcoming events.

See the **back page** for more, including details on the DMO's upcoming roadshow in Australia.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, plus a special update from **VisitBerlin**.

Titan guarantees

NEW entrant to the Aussie market Titan Travel has revealed to *Travel Daily* that it is now guaranteeing departures on 100% of its tours in response to strong advice from agents.

"For agents this means if it's booked either in the Titan Travel AU agent portal or via our dedicated Australian team in the call centre then it's guaranteed to go," Julie Primmer said, from Titan's GSA Ascend Travel Group.

The announcement coincides with a Titan tour across Australia.

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Merci for the education

ATOUT France has launched a new online training platform for travel agents called 'France Connaisseur', which aims to educate the trade about the allures of the European destination using more engaging and succinct learning methods. Hailed as a platform designed for all types of travel advisors,

the French learning tool contains 15 separate modules covering hidden gems, local customs, popular attractions, and off-the-beaten-path adventures.

Also on offer are downloadable resources to help "sharpen the skills" of French sellers, as well as a range of fun trivia games, videos and interactive activities.

There is no deadline on completion to obtain the France Connaisseur badge and certificate, with each session only running a short 12 minutes to assist time-poor advisors.

"This e-learning tool is the perfect blend of education and entertainment, exclusively designed to upskill travel advisors with busy schedules," Atout said.

The platform arrives after long-standing local Atout head Patrick Benhamou stepped down in Apr (**TD** 13 Apr), with a formal replacement yet to be named.

Access the training **HERE**. **AB**

Empowering women

ADVENTURE World is promoting women's empowerment through its latest Authentic India and Sri Lanka Collection (**CLICK HERE**).

Each of the itineraries allow travellers to tailor their adventure to specific interests, including sights such as the Taj Mahal in Agra or Srigaya Rock Palace in SL.

The new collection features a partnership with The Pink City Rickshaw Company, providing new employment opportunities.

RezLive debuts in Oz



B2B reservation system RezLive has entered the Australian market this week courtesy of a new rep agreement with Aviareps.

Travel Designer Group's flagship portal has been on a rapid growth trajectory in the Asia Pacific region before launching in Australia, offering travel agents a range of travel product across hotels, tours and activities.

Benefits of signing up to the new platform include dynamic and flexible rates, the option to hold and block prices, and instant booking confirmation.

Other incentives include a generous loyalty program and 24/7 support services.

Agents are invited to register **HERE**, and for those who make their first booking by 30 Nov they will receive a \$10 Amazon voucher as a welcome incentive.



YOU have to admire the creativity of one of the tour operators in the Norwegian fjord township of Alesund.

A popular option for visitors is the "city train", a narrated tour through the streets which conveniently explores all the highlights along with explanatory narration in multiple languages.

But what to use for the backing music?

It turns out that Alesund has inspired a local musician called Jan Honningdal, whose hit album Alesundsanger ("Songs from Alesund") features on the soundtrack.

It's also available on Spotify (**CLICK HERE**), with the artist possibly related to the tour company's General Manager, Nils Ivar Honningdal.



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Globus shuffles its family

GLOBUS family of brands has announced three new appointments to its Australasian sales team, as part of an ongoing restructure (**TD 26 Sep**).

Gia Acitelli (pictured) has joined the escorted tour company as National Sales Leader, bringing two decades of experience in the travel industry.

She was most recently Commercial Manager, ANZ for Virgin Atlantic, and prior to that was General Manager Australia & New Zealand at APG Network.

The new team leader will be responsible for the planning, implementation and direction of national sales activities for the Business Development Managers (BDMs) and Sales Coordinators.

"I look forward to working with the team to nurture its current sales partnerships and to developing new opportunities for the company to further drive results for the remainder of 2023 and beyond," Acitelli enthused.

The restructure will also see Greg Schein move up into the role of Strategic Business Leader ANZ after leading teams in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT as Regional Sales Manager since 2018, with the promotion making him responsible for driving new sales opportunities.

Additionally, Sarah Hoskin will assume the role of National Account Manager for Helloworld.

She has a proven track record, having worked for Globus since 2019 as Business Development



Manager for Vic and Tasmania.

"Gia, Greg, and Sarah's honed experience within the industry combined with their passion and proven track record in sales will be pivotal in growing our relationships with agents and industry colleagues and continuing to meet and exceed the demand from travellers," Globus Head of Commercial ANZ Brett Simon said. *JM*

Singapore slings ad

THE Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is inspiring travellers to choose Singapore as their next holiday destination in its latest global campaign.

The 'Made in Singapore' marketing push features a twist on some of the country's iconic attractions, as well as highlighting new experiences such as the newly opened bird park at Mandai Wildlife Reserve and the new Pan Pacific Orchard hotel.

STB expects this year's visitor arrivals to recover to about 12-14 million, with Australia remaining as one of the key markets, having recovered 95% of 2019's visitor arrivals from Jan to Aug 2023.

Sabre Upgrade IQ

SABRE has released a new AI-powered solution which aims to help airlines better manage their premium cabin inventory.

Dubbed Upgrade IQ, Sabre says the platform "can help airlines generate incremental and diversified revenue by optimising the available inventory in their premium cabins, while elevating and streamlining the customer experience".

Upgrade IQ allows travellers to bid for an upgrade at any stage prior to travel, including during the booking flow, at check-in or even via email.

Cairns biz expansion

CAIRNS Convention Centre has reopened after undergoing a \$176 million expansion (**TD 02 Feb**), gaining an extra 10,500m² of space, including the Trinity Room, a new, 500-capacity banquet venue with an outdoor terrace.

The transformed world-class facility also now boasts a large, undercover function space featuring native, tropical fauna.

More events news on **page five**.

Canyon Ranch boss

DESTINATION wellness specialist Canyon Ranch has appointed Mark Rivers as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Rivers was previously the group's Head of Resort Development, with his new role seeing him manage the portfolio of retreats in Arizona, California, Las Vegas and Massachusetts.



ALESUND

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of **MSC Cruises**, which is showcasing its groundbreaking new **MSC Euribia** on a North Sea voyage.

DESPITE her size, the expansive docking facilities in Alesund, Norway allow **MSC Euribia** to conveniently tie-up just a few minutes' stroll from the centre of town.

Alesund is a fascinating Norwegian coastal destination with a rich history, including unique Art Nouveau architecture in many buildings which were reconstructed in the early 1900s following a massive fire which destroyed about 800 wooden houses.

Now a thriving community, Alesund is actually a network of seven interconnected islands which are accessible by multiple bridges and extensive underwater tunnels.

While many guests enjoyed a variety of shore excursions, others were very happy to just disembark and stroll around the town, with a range of convenient sightseeing options also available at the European cruise terminal.

Casting off in the late afternoon, **Euribia** will now make her way several hundred kilometres further north to Flam for our final Norway call.



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Domestic travel on the slide

AUSTRALIANS are spending less on domestic travel than they were a year ago, a new report from Tourism Research Australia has found.

The *National Visitor Survey* study for Jun showed there was an 11% decrease on holiday travel when compared to the same month in 2022, while the domestic VFR market also took a hit, dropping by 15%.

The number of nights spent on trips also decreased by 2% when compared to last year, dropping

to 24.4 million for the month.

While the leisure segment showed signs of distress in Jun, the same couldn't be said for the domestic business travel market, which saw a significant 41% increase in spend to \$2.4 billion.

Corporate travel in Australia looked impressive against pre-pandemic benchmarks as well, with Jun fairing 16% better on spend compared to Jun 2019.

Day trips were another bright spot for the month, with the report highlighting that Australians took 17.2 million day trips and spent \$2.6 billion.

Compared to Jun 2022, this represented a 9% increase in day trips and a 12% spike in spend.

When contrasted with 2019, day trip outlay was up 31%. *AB*

ANZCRO brochure



ANZCRO is showcasing its Luxury Collection for 2023-2024 in a new eBrochure featuring inspiration for Aussie agents to plan, book and create unique holidays in Australia and NZ.

The 138-page guide contains stunning imagery, detailed product descriptions, inclusive dining experiences, as well as a range of exclusive bonus offers.

Included in the new collection are 38 New Zealand luxury lodges, alpine retreats and unique stays, as well as Australian island escapes, award-winning lodges and wild bush luxury - see [HERE](#).

Quark joins CLIA

QUARK Expeditions has joined the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) as its newest global member, strengthening its already established regional membership in Australia.

"We're extremely proud to be a new member of CLIA, an industry association whose values are so closely aligned with ours," Quark Expeditions President Andrew White enthused.

CLIA CEO Kelly Craighead also shared her approval, stating "we're delighted to have Quark Expeditions join our global community at a time when there's so much energy and innovation in the sector".

Hungary whets Aussie appetite



REPRESENTATIVES from Visit Hungary arrived Down Under last week on their inaugural mission to strengthen ties in the Australian travel sector, visiting Melbourne and Sydney to connect with potential partners.

The delegation held meetings with key players in the cruise and land arrangements sectors, laying the foundation for future collaborations and positioning Hungary prominently within the trade in Australia.

In partnership with AVIAREPS, the DMO hosted an exclusive

event last Wed at Watersedge in Sydney, inviting major trade partners and travel agents to brush up on their knowledge of Hungary's offerings while enjoying a lavish sit-down dinner, complemented with the country's finest wines.

"This has been a phenomenal week for us," Visit Hungary Business Development Director Zsuzsa Szegner shared, adding that the Aussie market "aligns perfectly with what Hungary has to offer."

"We are optimistic about the collaborations that will follow and are committed to ensuring that every Australian traveller finds something to resonate with in Hungary," she explained. *JM*

Azamara WC 2026

AZAMARA has revealed details of a new 155-day World Cruise in 2026, which will sail from Miami on 06 Jan to visit 35 countries.

Shore excursion highlights of the lengthy voyage visits to the Taj Mahal in India, Peru's Machu Picchu, the Colosseum in Rome, the ancient Jordanian city of Petra, as well as treks along the The Great Wall of China.

Azamara's 2026 World Cruise offers over \$22,000 in value, including 13 exclusive events, \$3,000 in onboard credit, \$4,000 in credit for shore excursions, a premium beverage package upgrade, wi-fi, and more.

Amora Bris refurb

AMORA Group has announced its newly purchased Amora Hotel Brisbane five-star hotel will receive a significant refurbishment investment.

The Thailand-based company said it is now ready to cement its footprint as a five-star hospitality group in Australia as tourism demand continues to rebound, as well as pursue a longer-term goal of expanding in key cities in the Asia Pacific.

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TAG snags CCM

TRAVEL and event management company TAG (formerly known as The Appointment Group) has acquired CCM Travel, one of Sydney's leading conference and incentive agencies.

The purchase will help TAG expand its event offering to a wider client base, with plans to slowly integrate the company's already established client base, most of whom are in the hospitality and events market.

CCM Travel will continue to operate as a separate business "powered by TAG" for the next six months, before transitioning under the TAG global events division and merging both companies' employees and clients.

BUSINESS EVENTS BOUNCEBACK

AUSTRALIA holds plenty of appeal as a business events destination, new research from Tourism Australia (TA) reflects.

The 2023 Business Events Consumer Demand Project (CDP), which looks at the factors influencing planners when choosing a destination for business events, found that the industry is in a stronger position compared to 12 months ago.

TA Executive GM Commercial and Business Events Australia, Robin Mack, said the research shows that both association and incentive sectors are recovering nicely, with over 90% of decision makers running events in the last year - up 32% from last year.

"It's encouraging to see the international business events sector is in a stronger position compared to 12 months ago,

with decision makers feeling increasingly confident in running events internationally," she shared.

The CDP also found that Australia has a positive reputation among incentive planners, who consistently identified it as a safe and secure destination with a range of quality accommodation options, an appealing climate, good food, wine, local cuisine and produce, as well as excellent business events facilities.

Australian Indigenous experiences are attracting growing interest from decision makers, with 85% saying they recognise the appeal of an Aboriginal experience in a program itinerary, such as a traditional Welcome to Country ceremony.



Although global uncertainty and key financial factors continue to be major influences on decision makers' confidence, 90% indicated they will either retain or increase their budget compared to pre-COVID times.

The survey included 160 associations across the US, UK and Europe, and 402 corporate decision makers from the incentive sector in 10 key markets between May and Jun 2023. JM

Vale Rodd Craig

AUSTRALIA'S business events sector is mourning the loss of Queensland-based industry stalwart and "exhibition junkie" Rodd Craig, who passed away last Fri after a battle with poor health.

Craig enjoyed a long career in the exhibition sector, starting in the '80s when he partnered with local organisations to deliver events, before joining Exhibition Hire Services (now ExpoNet) in the '90s, and founding Exhibition Event Services in 2003.

A celebration of his life will be held at Southport Yacht Club in Queensland on 05 Oct at 2pm.

TNZ celebrates conference champions



TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) recently hosted an awards ceremony to recognise 45 conference champions from across the country who have successfully bid for and won international conferences.

Held during TNZ's inaugural Business Events Week, the evening acknowledged the 54 international conferences that were secured in NZ in the last financial year, estimated to be worth NZ\$63.8m.

Opera appoints

ESTEEMED chef Danielle Alvarez has joined the events team at the Sydney Opera House, where she will develop tailored menus for private functions hosted in the iconic building's event spaces, including corporate networking and gala dinners.

As Culinary Director, Alvarez will champion local producers and fresh, seasonal food, bringing her farm-to-table philosophy to events in the Opera House.



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Yum - Vikings for breakfast



VIKING Cruises' Commercial Manager Ramon Drew hosted a special breakfast update for the team from Helloworld Kiama in New South Wales last week.

The tasty in-store experience saw Drew showcase Viking's extensive range of river, ocean and expedition cruises on offer for keen Aussie cruisers, including its newly released 2024 Grand Voyages and flight credit deals.

Drew is **pictured** left with the Kiama team of Suzanne Geale, Brooke Bradley and Georgia Williamson after delivering his insightful presentation. *BP*

Oceania adds seven

OCEANIA Cruises has flagged seven new sailings to French Polynesia and Hawaii on board Regatta in 2025 will be open for reservations on 04 Oct.

The new cruises will visit French Polynesia and Hawaii during Aug, Sep and Oct in 2025, with highlights including the lagoons of Bora Bora, the black sand beaches of Tahiti, the coral reefs of Raiatea, and the remote jungles of Nuku Hiva.

Itineraries span from 10 to 18 days in duration.

APPOINTMENTS

Send your new appointments to: appointments@traveldaily.com.au

Pro-invest Group has announced three key appointments to its growing Australian hotel portfolio. **Bruce Ryde** has become the new Cluster General Manager at Pro-invest Hotels. In addition to his current role as General Manager at Kimpton Margot Sydney, Ryde will be responsible for the operations at the soon-to-open Hotel Indigo Sydney Potts Point and the recently opened Hotel Indigo Melbourne. Meanwhile **Shihalini Rajaratnam** has taken on the role of Cluster Hotel Manager at Holiday Inn Express Melbourne. She will take charge of operating the group's properties of Melbourne Little Collins and Holiday Inn Express Melbourne Southbank. Meanwhile **Klarisa Dzambo** has become the new Hotel Manager at Holiday Inn Express Melbourne Southbank. She began her tenure with the group as a Food & Beverage Supervisor before embarking on a successful spell as an Assistant Hotel Manager prior to the promotion.

In an attempt to drive its global growth, **Quark Expeditions** has announced two senior appointments which sees **Beth Mercier** being promoted to Senior Director, Global Partnership Sales, and **Becky Francis** become the new Regional Sales Director, EMEA. Mercier has 15 years of experience in the expedition cruise industry and will drive relationships between global partners and the polar tours provider. Francis joins as an award-winning personnel in the areas of global sales training and program development, and will provide enhanced knowledge with the sales force.

Bringing a wealth of global experience in aviation and tourism to the board at **Christchurch Airport**, industry veteran **Ed Sims** has joined as Non Executive Director. Sims held similar roles in various organisations, including KiwiRail and CarbonClick. He is also currently the Board Advisor of Virgin Australia and will help to steer the hub in its desired direction through the new role.

Airbus has nominated **Christian Scherer** to become the new Commercial Aircraft Business CEO, reporting to Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury. The key appointment will enable the aerospace manufacturer to reinforce its focus on the commercial aircraft business, with Scherer bringing with him plenty of specialist experience, including a seven-year stint at ATR as its CEO before the transition.

Michael Leskinen has been promoted to Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President at **United Airlines**. Leskinen will oversee several aspects of the business including corporate finance, treasury, financial planning and analysis, tax and more in his new role. He was most recently the airline's Financial Executive, and he also boasts two decades of experience on Wall Street.

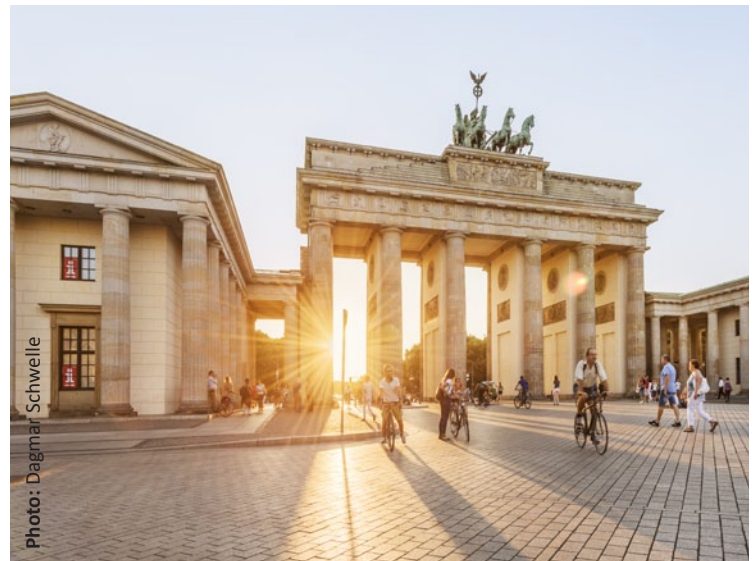
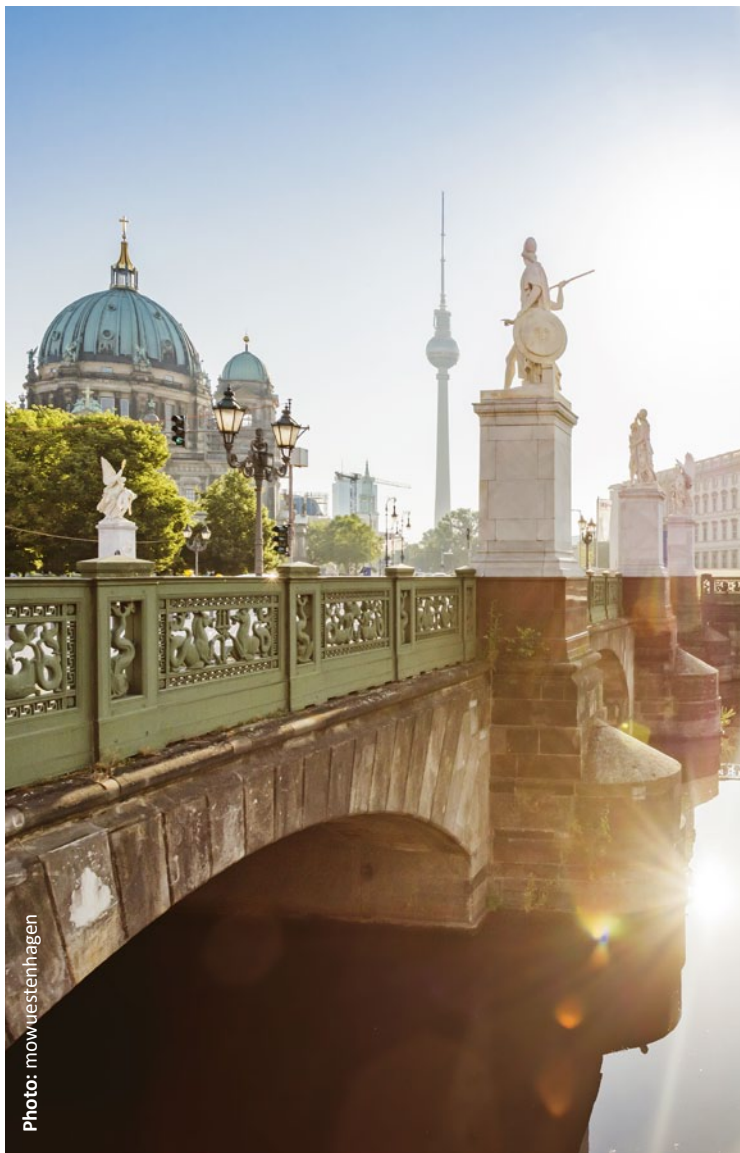


Travel Daily

On Board: MSC Euribia Carousel Lounge

The spacious Carousel Lounge at the rear of *MSC Euribia* provides the perfect place to relax during the day, while transforming into a multi-purpose entertainment venue each evening complete with a big band.

Two covered terraces complement the soaring space, with daytime activities including ballroom dancing and games, plus guest entertainers and themed soirees after dark.



Discover the world of Berlin

Berlin is a trendsetter: Be it sightseeing or trendy nightlife, galleries or gastronomy, music or fashion - the vibrant city always has something fresh to offer. Besides its signature attractions such as the Brandenburg Gate, the "Reichstag" and the Berlin Television Tower, the German capital is known for its diversity and wide variety of contrasts!

Berlin writes world history

The fall of the Berlin Wall on 09 Nov 1989, was one of the most important events in recent history. It marked the end of the division of Berlin - and the entire world - into East and West and saw the end of the Cold War. In 2024, Berlin celebrates this special 35th anniversary with a series of events and ceremonies.

Four weeks of football fever - and the finals in Berlin

The undisputed highlight of the 2024 sporting year is the [UEFA Euro 2024](#) European Football Championship taking place from 14 June to 14 July. Under the motto "United by Football - United in the Heart of Europe", 24 nations will play to win the title, which is awarded every four years. Berlin will host three group matches, one round of 16 and one quarter-final, plus the finals in the Olympic Stadium! Visitors and locals alike will enjoy the [Fan-Fest](#) on the Straße des 17. Juni, and witness the Brandenburg Gate transformed into the largest football goal in the world.

For many more insider tips on shopping, dining, accommodation, event news and sightseeing highlights, [visit our](#)

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VISITBERLIN SYD & MEL ROADSHOWS

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