



TIMES are tough at the moment, and one woman is beating it all by paying \$300 per week to live on board a cruise ship.

Laura Butler said she gave up the corporate grind in her mid-50s to live full-time on a cruise ship, as reported on realestate.com.au.

Butler said on her YouTube account she has taken advantage of a little-known gambling points-program system many cruise lines offer.

The self-proclaimed budget and loyalty program strategist said she was introduced to the concept after playing blackjack on a 14-night cruise to the Baltics on board Holland America Line's *Rotterdam*.

While celebrating her birthday, she spent many hours buying in on A\$40 minimum-bet tables.

However before the end of the cruise, Holland America invited her back on board, after noticing her proclivity for playing cards.

She gambled on the next cruise too, this time on the slots, where she was able to amass enough points for another seven-night sailing.

The woman said the key to the strategy - which is clearly not foolproof - is to lose as little money as possible, saying she has lost as much as \$2,300 on one sailing.

Ponant hits the road



PONANT Explorations, Journey Beyond, and Bunnik Tours launched a rural 'The World to You' roadshow, which ended earlier this month.

The three companies joined forces over a fortnight to connect with agents and travellers across rural New South Wales/ACT, delivering a series of trade and consumer events.

The events provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen rural trade relationships, showcase the brands' unique offerings, and inspire future travel.

Week one focused on northern NSW, with the team travelling to Coffs Harbour, Armidale and Inverell from 27-29 May.

Windsong Travel Inverell went the extra mile for the event, promoting it through radio advertising, in-store signage, and personalised invites, securing an impressive 63 RSVPs.

The roadshow then continued to southern NSW from 03-05 Jun, with events in Canberra, Temora, and Griffith.

The team partnered with seven trade agencies for three events, with a morning tea in Temora one of the highlights, organised by Temora Travel.

Guests were treated to a delicious spread in the Temora Town Hall Theatre, catered by local talent Dimi, who is a former contestant on *The Great Australian Bake Off*. MS

Croisi Xmas cruise

CROISIEUROPE has launched a new hotel barge cruise, taking in the Christmas markets of Belgium.

The four-day voyage, which launches in Dec, will sail between Bruges and Ghent, and includes a visit to the markets in both destinations.

Passengers will have the opportunity to visit both of Bruges' two markets.

There is a larger one, which is known for its traditional chalets, ice skating rink, and festive decorations; and a smaller market, which focuses more on crafts.

Other highlights include a guided tour of Bruges, and a tasting of traditional Flemish beer at the Bourgogne des Flandres brewery; a tour of Ghent with a tasting of local specialities; and onboard tastings of hot chocolate.



A tribute from the Kimberley

I'M CURRENTLY on board *Seabourn Pursuit*, exploring the Kimberley as part of an APT charter.

It feels fitting to acknowledge the recent passing of APT founder Geoff McGeary, a true visionary who shaped how countless people have experienced this country and the world - vale Geoff.

His legacy lives on in APT's deep commitment to creating enriching travel moments that connect people to places and communities, both on land and at sea.

For decades, APT has pioneered seamless ways to link its touring products, from immersive land-based adventures and iconic rail journeys to expedition cruising.

Today, that heritage shines as APT blends rail, land and sea into memorable itineraries that appeal to every kind of traveller.

As a long-standing and highly valued member of the ACA, APT has also played a pivotal role in strengthening the connections between the cruise sector and rural destinations across Australia.

Here in the Kimberley, that experience is more meaningful by the special bond *Pursuit* has with the Wunambal Gaambara people, her godparents, along with APT's connections with the Dambimangari traditional owners.

Their roles as custodians of this spectacular land adds a deeper significance to every voyage, reminding us of the profound responsibility we have to respect, learn from and protect the environments and cultures we visit.

As I stand on the deck and watch the Kimberley's rugged beauty glide past, I'm reminded of the countless ways travel shapes us.