



**SYDNEY** has been ranked the world's seventh most beautiful cruise port, according to a focus group conducted by AllClear Travel Insurance.

The study involved 100 participants connected to eye-tracking technology, with measurements on visual engagement used to determine the top 20 most visually appealing cruise ports, and assign a score out of 100.

Each participant was observed to see how long it took for their eyes to catch on a memorable icon or feature in the port, and for how long they were fixated on it.

Sydney was the only Australian city to feature in the list, scoring 76, while Malta's capital Valletta claimed top spot with a perfect 100.

The UNESCO-listed city caught the eye of most study participants for its scenic blue harbour, classic architecture, and visual appeal.

Valletta led the ranking ahead of Ushuaia in Argentina, which scored 86, followed by Palermo, Stockholm, Nassau, and Oranjestad.



## Croatia rewards top agents



**A NUMBER** of top-selling agents from around the world were recently invited by Unforgettable Croatia on board *My Wish* for a seven-night journey along the Croatian coast.

Cruising from Sibenik to Dubrovnik, the group of 15 agents plus their travel companions were hosted on the trip by Head of Global Sales David Stone.

Company founder Graham Carter also joined the cruise for a few days to express his thanks to the group for their ongoing support and sales expertise.

Carter's visit coincided with a massive white party on the ship's sun deck, complete with free-flowing drinks and a captain's dinner, all backed with a live band belting out tracks to keep the party going.

"Unforgettable Croatia is on track to secure its highest-ever occupancy rate in 2025 - currently in excess of 98% - and the trade

has been instrumental to this success," Carter said.

"In Australia alone, bookings are up 27% and revenue is up 39% year-on-year, with Australian travellers now accounting for 20% of all guests on board our small-ship Croatia cruises."

The voyage included daily three-course lunches, a cocktail welcome dinner and daily stops for some swimming and use of the ship's watersport equipment.

On land, the group enjoyed visits to Trogir, Split, Brac, Jelsa, Hvar, Korcula, Slano and Ston, with highlights including a chance to sample freshly shucked oysters.

The group also participated in a guided tour of Krka National Park, and were shown around the Diocletian Palace in Split and Dubrovnik old town. *ML*

Australian agent Samantha Riches from MyCruise was among the contingent and is pictured above with David Stone.



### Charting success in Townsville

**I'M ON** the road again this week - this time in Townsville for a two-day cruise program that's brought together representatives from both international and domestic cruise lines, as well as ground handlers, as well as Tourism & Events Queensland.

The event highlights the growing interest in this vibrant North Queensland port.

It's been fantastic to reconnect in person and take part in a productive workshop at the Port of Townsville, where I delivered a State of the Industry update and joined in roundtable discussions with local tourism operators.

These conversations are crucial as we continue to strengthen regional engagement and align on the evolving expectations of cruise guests.

Townsville is a real success story. After a record 21 ship calls in the 2024/25 season - up from 18 the previous year - the city already has 26 visits on the books for 2025/26.

This growth is no accident; it reflects years of strategic investment and collaboration by the port, Townsville Enterprise and the broader tourism community.

Yesterday's port tour showcased recent infrastructure upgrades that are enabling Townsville to welcome a growing number of cruise visitors, while the city family and today's visit to Magnetic Island have highlighted the region's compelling, authentic experiences.

Townsville's momentum is a great example of what's possible when regions commit to cruise - and I'm excited to see what's next.