

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 20 December 2011

## Pacific Sun sold to Chinese company

Carnival Australia has announced major changes for next year, including the sale of P&O's *Pacific Sun* and upgrades to *Dawn*.

**PASSENGERS** booked on *Pacific Sun* from 08 July 2012 will need to switch cruises or get a refund as the ship has been sold to an undisclosed buyer.

According to *Cruise Weekly* sources, the 25-year-old, 1,900-passenger superliner was recently purchased by a Chinese company, which is likely to launch new cruises out of China towards the end of next year.

A spokesperson for P&O would not confirm the rumour, saying: "Details of the buyer and the price are not being disclosed by Carnival Australia and are matters for the buyer to consider."

*Sun* has been with the P&O fleet for more than seven years and will operate its final local voyage, from Brisbane to the Pacific Islands, on 1 July 2012.

Ann Sherry, CEO of Carnival Australia, said many past passengers would want to sail for the last time on "Australia's favourite cruise ship" to say goodbye.

"We will be happy to welcome them onboard as *Pacific Sun* completes her proud service with P&O Cruises," she said.

Cabins are still available for several sailings departing from Brisbane, Sydney and Newcastle between January and June 2012.

Sherry said *Pacific Sun* had made a big contribution to the growth of the local cruise industry and had introduced thousands of people to cruising.

"It is thanks to her popularity that we have

grown so quickly and successfully," she said.

P&O Cruises is currently assisting passengers affected by the sale to rebook onto other ships or to receive a full refund if no alternative cruise choice is suitable.

**MEANWHILE**, the Queensland-based *Pacific Dawn* will undergo a major refurbishment in April, adding interconnecting family cabins and a giant entertainment screen on the top deck.

The ship's 50 suites and mini-suites will also be upgraded with new furnishings, carpets and artworks.

Public areas to be revamped include the buffet, show lounge and two bars – Bengal Bar will be transformed into the sports-themed Orient Pub, and Baccus Bar will become Mix cocktail bar.

Announcing the changes, Sture Myrmell, vice president of hotel operations at Carnival Australia, said the changes would give *Dawn* some of the most popular features found on other P&O ships, such as *Pacific Pearl* and *Jewel*.

## Cruise Weekly closes for 2011

**THE** team at *Cruise Weekly* would like to thank all our readers for your continued support throughout 2011.

Today is the last *Cruise Weekly* consumer issue for 2011, and what a big year it has been.

But be assured that 2012 will be even bigger, with a whole host of new stuff in store, including a new My Cruise feature where we ask readers to send in their own cruise stories for a chance to win movie tickets.

**CW** looks forward to sharing all the latest cruise news with you in the new year, with the first 2012 issue set to arrive in your inboxes on 10 January.

Until then, happy cruising!

## TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

*Cruise Weekly's* consumer issue today has five pages of the latest cruise news.

**PLUS** see **page four** for details on *CW's* Royal Caribbean Win a Cruise Competition.

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### Ask The Expert


with Sarina Bratton

**THANK YOU** to everyone who sent in questions for our guest expert, Sarina Bratton, Founder of Orion Expedition Cruises, who finishes up as our December Expert this week.

Stay tuned to **CW** next year as we have a whole host of new experts ready and waiting to answer all your burning cruise questions.

To read Sarina's responses to today's questions visit [facebook.com/cruiseweekly](http://facebook.com/cruiseweekly) or click on the Facebook link beside the questions.

**Q1 from John, NSW:** John would like to know if there is one place that Orion has not gone yet, that Sarina would love to send the Orion fleet. 

**Q2 from Jackie, NSW:** Jackie has asked if Orion plans on expanding its fleet over the next ten years and where Sarina sees the company in the next ten years. 

## Christmas cruises return to schedule

Low water levels in Europe have disrupted river cruising in several countries but recent rainfall has helped.

**AFTER** weeks of swapping ships and bus tours replacing some sections of Danube and Rhine cruises, passengers have had their Christmas wishes answered with most itineraries back on track.

In November and early December, Europe's worst drought in 200 years have prevented many vessels from sailing in some shallow sections of the waterways.

Avalon Waterways had one cruise affected: a nine-day itinerary from Prague to Vienna with 19 Australian and New Zealand passengers onboard the new *Avalon Panorama*.

"Arrangements were made for all passengers to continue on an adjusted itinerary for the remainder of their holiday, travelling by coach and staying at hotels," Christian Schweitzer, Avalon Waterways' marketing manager for Australasia, told *Cruise Weekly*.

Passengers were also offered a refund on the affected two-night portion of their cruise.

"No further disruption is anticipated at this time," Schweitzer said.

APT reported limited impact because its ships have "less draft than most" other vessels.

"All ships are operating normally with only one small exception, that being that the *AmaLegro*, *AmaLyra* and *AmaDolce* cruised only as far as Komarom on their cruises towards Budapest," the spokesperson said.

A Budapest city tour was organised from Komarom for all cruises ending and starting in Budapest.

John Molinaro, general manager Australia, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises said sailings on the Rhine and Danube have primarily operated as scheduled.

"In some instances the itinerary has been slightly adjusted.

"Uniworld is fortunate to have the number of ships that we do, which also helps when faced with the challenge of modifying itineraries," he said.

Liz Glover, marketing manager, Scenic Tours, said: "We are monitoring this situation daily, and with our experienced operations team based in Europe we have managed to keep any disruptions to a minimum.

"One of the benefits to our guests is that we have our own fleet of ships in Europe we have

been able to coordinate their availability so that we can navigate most of the river sections."

Teresa Fors, Viking River Cruises' managing director, Australia & New Zealand, said conditions were improving after recent heavy rain and snow.

"It is raining and snowing a lot in Europe at the moment so all should be fine," Fors emailed from Viking's London office where she has been based this month.

"We are all back on schedule again," Fors said.

The company is providing credit to passengers affected by the earlier changes on a case-by-case basis.

Other shipping has also been affected, with around 80 cargo ships recently stranded near the border of Hungary and Serbia.

Meanwhile, the Danube and Sava's dry riverbanks have exposed another surprise: sunken German World War II-era warships and unexploded bombs that fell during the 1940s.

Merry Christmas



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## Last Minute Deals

This weekly column highlights hot deals on cruises departing in the next 100 days – ideal for our spontaneous readers.

Check out this week's cruise bargain!

### 7-nights – Saigon to Siem Reap onboard *The Jahan*

- From: \$4,139pp
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- Visits: Saigon, Ho Chi Minh, Cai Be - Sa Dec - Chau Doc, Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Tonle Sap and Siem Reap
- Includes: Return flights; seven-nights cruising; 2 nights accom in Siem Reap; 2 nights accom in Ho Chi Minh City; guided tours of Ho Chi Minh City, Chu Chi tunnels and Siem Reap & Angkor Wat; transfers; entrance fees and free room service
- Visit [www.ecruising.travel](http://www.ecruising.travel)



Swan Hellenic would like to say thank you for your support in 2011. And for those with a mind to travel, we look forward to welcoming you onboard in 2012

**Wishing you and your family a safe & wondrous Christmas & New Year!**



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## Wind Surf's new look complete

THE first phase of refurbishments onboard Windstar Cruises' *Wind Surf*, is now complete.

The refurbishments to the vessel's accommodations and corridors are designed to give *Wind Surf* a "new luxurious, classic, stylish yacht look".

Changes include new leather headboards, stately arm chairs, linen wall coverings, lighting features, elegant window coverings, plush wool carpeting, artwork and stylish bed cushions in *Wind Surf's* staterooms, whilst suites were additionally outfitted with new furniture that converts easily to lounging, dining, or accommodating a third occupant.

Corridors were completely renovated from floor to ceiling with new wall coverings, carpeting, ceiling finishes, lighting and artwork.

## Adonia cruise cancellation

P&O Cruises UK has had to disappoint guests and cancel *Adonia's* 10-night Mediterranean cruise, departing from 03 January 2012, due to "essential maintenance work".

The cruise line described the decision as "unavoidable" but did not elaborate on what the essential maintenance work was.

Guests will receive a full refund plus 25% of the value of their fare as a future cruise credit.

## Santa sees a Diamond in Sydney



**SYDNEY**-siders recently got an eyeful of the biggest vessel to visit Australia so far this summer, Princess Cruises' *Diamond Princess*.

The whopping 116,000-tonne *Diamond* sailed into Circular Quay's Overseas Passenger Terminal at a respectable 7am last Friday morning, at the end of a cruise from Asia.

At 63 metres in height, *Diamond* was too tall to fit under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, but she put on a good spectacle for onlookers, taking up the length of four 747 jumbo jets in one of the world's most recognisable harbours.

Meanwhile as the rest of Sydney gawked, lucky passengers boarded ready for their NZ Christmas cruise which departed the same day.

For those who missed her this time, *Diamond* is scheduled to cruise between Australia and NZ until February, visiting Sydney three times.



## ROWERS whisked up by *Serenity*.

Two rowers who found themselves in dire straits after capsizing their boat 777kms off the west coast of the Canary Islands were rescued by crew onboard *Crystal Serenity*.

The duo, Tom Fancett from the U.K. and Tom Sauer from the Netherlands, ran into trouble whilst competing in the 2011 Atlantic Challenge Race to row across the Atlantic, and spent 10 hours in a tiny life raft after a large wave sunk their boat.

Fortunately for the seriously stressed sea farers, *Serenity* was on a Transatlantic cruise en route to St Maarten, 200kms from the rowers, and was able to respond to a rescue call from the Falmouth Coast Guard.

After receiving the call *Serenity's* Captain Okland sailed full speed through worsening weather to rescue the pair, locating their flare in rough seas five hours later.

A medical check onboard revealed both survivors to be healthy, with the men telling crew they were very happy to be alive.

"While these young men hoped to cross the Atlantic in a most basic fashion, they are certainly experiencing the crossing in the most luxurious environment – an ironic, and heartwarming, turn of events," said *Crystal's* President Gregg Michel.

## Vanuatu cruise management

**CRUISERS** need not fear being ripped off by taxi and bus drivers in Vanuatu's Port Vila, following the implementation of a new Traffic Management Plan which will come into effect from 14 December next year.

The plan follows months of discussions between Vanuatu authorities and P&O Cruises and aims to address transportation issues at the port making the experience smoother and less confusing for passengers.

In addition to the plan, new taxi and bus fares have been scheduled and a new sign depicting the changes will be erected on the wharf to assist passengers determine the cost of the various services each transport offers.

The changes are timely considering that next year Vanuatu's cruise ship market is expected to grow 20%, with 112 cruise vessels confirmed to visit its waters.

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Follow us on:

Just one click away from keeping up to date with all the breaking news as it comes to hand...



## Did you know?

### Viking River Cruises

◆ Klaus Ungruh has been head chef with Viking for 10 years. He did some fun calculations and figured out that during his tenure in the ship kitchens his soup stocks have featured a whopping 21 tons of tomatoes! So you may say tomato or tomat<sub>o</sub>, but when it comes to 21 tons, we're pretty much speechless.

## Cooking like a pro with HAL

**HOLLAND** America Line has confirmed that Australian celebrity chef Shaun Presland (of Junior Masterchef fame) will be onboard *Volendam* when she sails out of Sydney Harbour on 17 January for a 14-day tour of NZ.

A major drawcard for the voyage, Presland will conduct two 45-minute cooking demonstrations and one 90-minute cooking class for guests onboard.

The voyage itself will include stops in Milford Sound, Stewart Island, Dunedin, Wellington, Christchurch, Napier, Rotorua, Auckland and the Bay of Islands.

## Athena arrives in Fremantle



Athena arriving in Fremantle

**ATHENA**, Classic International Cruises' 550-guest traditional liner, arrived in Fremantle over the weekend to begin her longest-ever season in Australian waters.

It is the eight consecutive season in WA for Classic International Cruises, with *Athena's* 2011/12 program slated to draw hundreds of cruisers from the east coast including Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland.

This season *Athena* will make a record 33 calls to Australian ports including 17 in WA and seven in SA, and she will also offer a month-long program in and out of Adelaide in January and February 2012 (the first and only ship to be based in Adelaide, with return cruises).

Interestingly, the 16,200-ton, classically-styled ship is one of the last remaining ships in Australia to still allow passengers to use traditional streamers at sailaways.

## Cruise Calendar

*Cruise Weekly's* cruise calendar details upcoming port calls of passenger cruise ships at various destinations in Australia and New Zealand.

### SYDNEY

<i>Silver Shadow (OPT)</i>	Wed 21 Dec
<i>Zaandam (Barangaroo)</i>	Fri 23 Dec
<i>Celebrity Century (OPT)</i>	Sat 24 Dec
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas (OPT)</i>	Tue 27 Dec

### BRISBANE

<i>Zaandam</i>	Sun 25 Dec
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Tue 27 Dec

### MELBOURNE

<i>Spirit of Adventure</i>	Tue 20 Dec
<i>Celebrity Century</i>	Thu 22 Dec
<i>Silver Shadow</i>	Fri 23 Dec
<i>Celebrity Century</i>	Mon 26 Dec
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Tue 27 Dec

### HOBART

<i>Diamond Princess</i>	Tue 20 Dec
<i>Spirit of Adventure</i>	Sat 24 Dec
<i>Silver Shadow</i>	Mon 26 Dec

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Flights not included. For full terms and conditions go to [cruiseweekly.com.au](http://cruiseweekly.com.au)

\*Based on the Berlitz Guide to Cruising and Cruise Ships 2010.

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## 2011 in review: Editor's favourites

By: Louise Goldsbury

This year I travelled on 12 cruises, courtesy of 11 cruise lines, clocking up 77 days on water (plus one trip without a ship, doing all the shore excursions in Fiji).

Each voyage was completely different, from luxury to family, small to big, river to ocean, in every continent (except Antarctica – hopefully next season!).

I also inspected another dozen ships, read thousands of press releases, and pumped out more than 220 reviews and news articles for *Cruise Weekly*.

It's been a big year for cruising – and not just for me. Australia saw record numbers of people taking holidays at sea, four new ships home-ported in Sydney and one in Brisbane, and bookings opened for next year's extravaganza of megaliners, circumnavigations and our most modern ships ever.

The following selections are not necessarily the world's best but were simply my favourites, based on personal experience.

What were your favourites of 2011? And what would you like us to check out in 2012? Email me at [louise@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:louise@cruiseweekly.com.au).

### Crew

Butler: Sooria, *Azamara Journey*

Cabin steward: Johnson, P&O's *Pacific Pearl*

Bartender: Simon, Sky Bar, *Seabourn Sojourn*

Waiter: Sven, Sea Cloud Cruises' *River Cloud II*

Overall team: Uniworld's *River Beatrice*

### Bar & dining

Food: Silversea's *Silver Spirit* (ocean); *River Cloud II* (river)

Specialty restaurant: Salt Grill on *Pacific Pearl*; Aqualina on *Azamara Journey*

Bar: Connoisseur's Corner, *Silver Spirit* (ocean); Bar du Leopard,

Uniworld's *SS Antoinette* (river)

### Onboard

Most innovative: Uniworld's *SS Antoinette*

Accommodation: *Seabourn Sojourn* (ocean); *Avalon Panorama* (river)

Day spa: *Seabourn Sojourn*

### Shore

Port of call: Hobart Bay, Alaskan Dream Cruises (ocean); Amsterdam (river)

Excursions: Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Spirit* in Fiji (ocean); APT's *Amalotus* on the Mekong (river)

Scenery: Alaska (ocean); Rhine (river)

Destination: Alaska (ocean); Mekong (river)

### For Families

For families: *Pacific Pearl* (P&O)

For under 40s: *Azamara Journey*

For luxury: *Seabourn Sojourn*; *Silver Spirit*

For adventure: *Alaskan Dream*

For culture: *Amalotus* (APT)

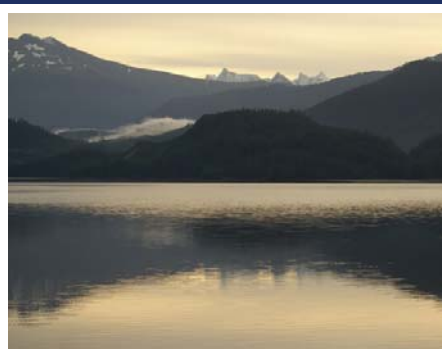
For mingling: *Antoinette* (Uniworld)

For solo cruisers: Fred Olsen Cruises

Make sure you watch out for the first *Cruise Weekly* issue for 2012 arriving in your inboxes (Tuesday 10 January) for a full account of *CW's* adventure and expedition cruise columnist Rod Eime's best and bravest experiences of 2011.



*Antoinette's riverside pool*



*Hobart Bay, Alaska*



*Best scenery: Rhine River*

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