

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

TUESDAY 19TH JULY 2011

[www.cruiseweekly.com.au](http://www.cruiseweekly.com.au)

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## Antarctic luxury rivalry heats up

A New Zealand-based firm claims it has the cheapest luxury cruises in Antarctica.

WILD EARTH TRAVEL IS PROMOTING "THE cheapest trips on the nicest ships" in Antarctica with its upcoming voyages on Compagnie du Ponant's mega-yachts *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral*.

The lowest fare for its *Le Boreal* cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula is US\$7,747 per person and the "average price" is US\$10,756pp.

According to Wild Earth general manager Aaron Russ, a comparable voyage on high-end competitor, Silversea's *Silver Explorer*, is priced from US\$12,373 with an average fare of US\$15,478.

Russ also analysed the cost of One Ocean Expeditions' *Akademik Ioffe*, a research vessel which has introduced "adventure concierges", and found its voyages are priced from US\$10,290 pp (triple cabin; shared facilities) with an average price of US\$12,990 per person.

Russ' analysis compared the three companies' Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica cruises in November 2011, converting fares to US dollars based on yesterday's exchange rate.

"As you can see, the *Le Boreal* is the cheapest of the options," he told *Cruise Weekly* yesterday.

"[*Le Boreal* and *L'Austral*] are a good bit larger and do carry more passengers [than the 132-passenger *Silver Explorer*] but they are limited to 199 guests in Antarctica which means that they can still stop at any landing sites, with the guests landing in two groups of 100 at a time – this is the same situation aboard the *Silver Explorer*."

The *Akademik Ioffe* carries only 98 passengers.

"Its main advantage is that everybody is

able to go ashore at once", Russ said.

Andrew Prossin, CEO, One Ocean Expeditions, told *CW* it was important to consider the quality of the expedition program and customer service.

"Our ship is very comfortable but it's not for someone who needs a fancy bathroom," Prossin said.

"We have transformed the way we deliver our service onboard and we're seeing a real difference since we introduced the adventure concierges for every guest."

Steve Odell, Silversea's senior vice president of sales and marketing, said *Silver Explorer* is the highest rated and most inclusive expedition product operating in the region, with butler service and 24-hour room service.

"Silversea Expedition fares are all inclusive of wines, champagnes and spirits, gratuities and all shore experiences," he pointed out.

## New Uniworld itinerary

UNIWORLD RIVER CRUISE COLLECTION HAS expanded its 2012 Asia program to include a new 24-day Grand Asia & the Mekong cruise/tour.

Starting in Beijing and travelling to Hanoi, the itinerary includes visits to the Great Wall and the Terracotta Warriors, as well as trips to Hangzhou and Shanghai, and a Mekong River cruise onboard *River Saigon*.

In Cambodia guests will visit the infamous Killing Fields and will explore Phnom Pen.

The cruise/tour is priced from \$9,748pp, (cruise only) and there are a range of earlybird discounts available.

See your travel agent for details.

## TODAY'S CRUISE WEEKLY

Welcome to today's consumer issue of *Cruise Weekly*, featuring four pages of cruise news and photos.

## CRUISE CALENDAR



### SYDNEY

*Pacific Jewel*

Fri 22 Jul

*Pacific Sun*

Mon 25 Jul

*Pacific Jewel*

Mon 25 Jul

BRISBANE

*Pacific Dawn*

Sat 23 Jul



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THE WORLD'S LEADING RIVER CRUISE LINE...BY FAR®

\*Conditions: Price listed in Australian dollars and valid on 2012 sailings only. Must book and pay in full by 31 July 2011. Discounts combinable with Past Passenger Discount and valid for new bookings only. Price is based on select Dec 2012 departures in Cat E stateroom. Visit [www.vikingrivercruises.com.au](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au) for full booking conditions.

## Celebrity food packages

CAPITILISING ON THE POPULARITY OF ITS BEVERAGE packages Celebrity Cruises has created a series of new specialty dining packages.

As such, guests are now able to book an Individual Dining Package which allows passengers to pre-purchase three or five specialty restaurant visits at a per person discounted rate.

Wine and Dine packages are also available per couple and include: a Savour Package with three reservations at specialty restaurants plus three bottles of wine; a Gourmand Package with five reservations at specialty restaurants plus three bottles of wine and a Bacchus Package with five reservations at specialty restaurants plus five bottles of wine.

The wines featured in the Wine and Dine options are pre-selected by Celebrity's wine experts and are chosen to provide guests with a wide range of international varietals.

The pre-paid dining experiences vary between ships and offer discounts of more than 25%.

**CLICK HERE** for full package details.🔗

## 'Wave season' to start earlier

Australia's summer cruise season will begin in September – and not in Sydney.

THE FIRST SHIP TO BE REDEPLOYED FOR THE 2011-12 season, Princess Cruises' *Sun Princess*, will arrive in Brisbane on 21 September – ahead of the traditional October launch.

Last year, the 2010-11 wave season kicked off in Sydney with two Princess ships, and the first international ship was Royal Caribbean's *Rhapsody of the Seas* on 16 October.

Queenslanders can have a preview of *Sun Princess* next Thursday when it docks at Portside Wharf at 7.30am.

"The 28 July arrival is just a one-day visit as she's en route from Fremantle to Sydney," a Princess Cruises spokesperson told **Cruise**

**Weekly** this week.

"There will be another Brisbane call four days later as she heads back to Fremantle from Sydney."

*Sun Princess* was based in Sydney last season but moves up to Brisbane this season – the first time Princess Cruises has based a ship in Queensland.

The line is sending the younger *Sea Princess* to Sydney as a replacement, arriving on 17 October.

But the harbour city's first international ship will be Holland America Line's *Volendam*, arriving 4 October.

Australia's first 21<sup>st</sup>-century superliner, *Radiance of the Seas*, commences its inaugural Sydney departures on 15 October, joining Royal Caribbean fleetmate *Rhapsody*.

Other newcomers calling Sydney home for the first time this season include Holland America's *Zaandam*, from 25 November, and Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Century*, from 30 November.🔗



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\*TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

WWW.SWANHELLENIC.COM.AU

## Royal Voyages on-line

IF YOU WANT TO GET A GOOD LOOK AT VOYAGER OF the Seas before she arrives in Australia next year, check out Royal Caribbean's website ([www.royalcaribbean.com.au](http://www.royalcaribbean.com.au)) under the Latest News section, where you will find a snapshot brochure (titled *Voyager of the Seas*).

Comprised of five pages, the brochure features a quick rundown of ship facts and highlights, as well as a vessel deckplan and two pages of ship photos.🔗

## Speaking with Fred Olsen

VETERAN NEWSCASTER PETER SISSONS HAS SIGNED with Fred Olsen Cruises alongside Northern Irish footballer and former Spurs and Arsenal manager, Terry Neill, to be guest speakers in the 2012/13 Vistas program.

Sissons has three BAFTAs to his name and a television career spanning 45 years and will join *Boudicca's* 23-night cruise from Portsmouth to the Mediterranean, on 12 October 2012.

From a wholly different world, Neill has made 29 league appearances for The Gunners, was a regular player for the Northern Ireland team, and played 275 games for Arsenal (becoming team captain in 1968), and he will join *Boudicca's* 35-night voyage to the Caribbean, departing from Southampton on 19 January 2012.


Find out more about Vistas by visiting - [www.fredolsencruises.com](http://www.fredolsencruises.com).🔗

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www.voyagesofdiscovery.com



## Cruising Washington

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE different, American Safari Cruises' Pacific Northwest itinerary onboard *Safari Quest* will be returning in 2012, departing from a new homeport, Seattle, Washington.

Commencing on 14 September the 22-guest luxury yacht will chaperone guests on 10 week-long voyages, exploring the inlets and islands of the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands including visits to Victoria, Jervis Inlet, the Harmony Islands, Princess Louisa Inlet, Nanaimo and the Gulf Islands, British Columbia; Friday Harbor, San Juan Island and Stuart Island.

Highlights of the itinerary include a tour of Butchart Gardens with a traditional British high tea, exploration by foot or by kayak in Princess Louisa Inlet, hiking along a bluff to Turning Point Lighthouse on Stuart Island and kayaking among the Harmony Islands.

*Quest* will also feature six more Northwest Passage cruises beginning 29 March 2013.

Cruise fares start from US\$3,995pp - for more details see your travel agent. ☼



## Atomic Cruising turns Fifty

by Roderick Eime

A story that seems long lost in the passage of time is the saga of *NS Savannah*, the world's first and only nuclear powered cruise ship.

Discounting the re-purposed Russian icebreakers taking adventurers to the North Pole and three purely cargo vessels built around the same time, this technical and political folly was conceived at the height of the Cold War as a showcase for Eisenhower's so-called "Atoms for Peace" program devised to share the nuclear knowledgebank for altruistic purposes.

In other words, propaganda.

As such, the *NS Savannah* was designed as a multipurpose vessel with a 14,000 ton cargo capacity and luxury cabins for 60 passengers.

Her lines were superb and she certainly looked every bit the space-age vessel that would carry the great nation into the future.

But almost as soon as construction began in 1959, her shortcomings and flaws became apparent, yet she was a star at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair.

Technically impressive with her 20,000 hp nuclear engine, her top speed was 23 knots and was capable of circling the earth 14 times at 20 knots without refuelling.

Despite grandiose intentions and the successful operation of a new type of pressurized water reactor, utilizing low-enriched uranium, the commercial market for such a vessel never materialized.

Named after the similarly innovative *SS Savannah*, the first steam-powered vessel to cross the Atlantic in 1819, the new nuclear ship would also prove to be far ahead of its time and just as economically disastrous.

Costing the best part of US\$50million to build and with several million dollars annual running costs coupled to specialised wharf and port requirements, crew training and engineering, the project was never going to be a financial success.

Although ungainly and compromised as a functioning cargo vessel, her passenger and public spaces were superb.

With accommodation for just 60 guests in fully air-conditioned suites with private facilities, there was certainly a feel of exclusivity and luxury about travelling aboard the *NS Savannah*.

A luxury 100-seat dining room, swimming pool, library and theatre all looked good on the brochure, but her passenger carrying days came to an abrupt end in 1965, just three years into her service life.

From then on, *NS Savannah* continued as a cargo ship, a role she did not fulfil well due to the many compromises in her design, and she ceased all revenue services in 1971 and has been laid up ever since.

Coincidentally, when taken out of service, bunker fuel was \$20/ton, but with Energy Crisis just months away, fuel quickly rose to \$80/ton.

Bad timing.

It has been proposed to maintain her as a museum ship and as such *NS Savannah* was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1991.

After a decommissioning cost of over \$1million, she now resides at the Canton Marine Terminal in Baltimore awaiting an uncertain fate.

Visit her website at:

[www.nssavannah.net](http://www.nssavannah.net)



NS Savannah



NS Savannah tickets

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<p><b>DAWN OF CIVILIZATION</b></p> <p>Istanbul to Dubai   Nov 15, 2012</p> <p>21 Day Voyage onboard <i>Nautica</i></p>	<p><b>INSIDE STATEROOM</b></p> <p>From <b>\$4,595*</b></p> <p><small>per guest</small></p>

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**TRAVELLERS CHOICE**

## A Coral coloured evening

CORAL PRINCESS CRUISES IS INVITING CRUISERS TO attend a special information evening, held in several locations, to learn about its offerings.


Info evenings are being held in Melbourne tonight, the Mornington Peninsula on 20 July, Geelong on 03 August, Bendigo on 04 August and Canberra on 09 August.

CLICK HERE for details. 

## Crystal discounts NY

CRYSTAL CRUISES HAS DROPPED THE PRICE OF ITS 25 October 12-day Pink Sands and White Beaches voyage from New York to Bermuda; St. Maarten, Antigua, Aruba, and the Caymans.

Sailing onboard *Crystal Symphony*, the voyage is now priced from US\$3,565pp, including US\$500 per couple of shipboard credit.

See your travel agent for details. 



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## Celebrity Alcoves

GUESTS WILL SOON BE ABLE TO RENT THEIR OWN private cabana onboard *Celebrity Silhouette*, enjoying exclusive sea and Lawn Club views.

Eight private cabanas, titled 'The Alcoves' will be available for full day rentals, accommodating two to four guests, just metres away from the Lawn Club.

In addition to having an alcove of privacy, guests will also enjoy a complimentary fruit plate; as well as ambient lighting; hand-held fans; chilled towels; four bottles of water; and all-day use of an iPad loaded with a variety of music, movies, games and magazines.

Wi-fi is also available in the Alcoves for a fee, whilst a dedicated attendant will also be on hand to take food and beverage orders (at additional charge).

Guests who would like to make use of the cabanas in the evenings can also take advantage of the Alcove's wine and cheese evenings; and those wanting a spa treatment whilst kicking back in their cabana can also have services organised.

Day Alcove rentals start at US\$99 per port day and US\$149 per day at sea.

See [www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com). 

## Swan Hellenic discounts

SWAN HELLENIC HAS LAST MINUTE DISCOUNTS ON A number of its 2011 European sailings onboard the 320-passenger *Minerva*.

Discounts are available for *Minerva's* 15-day Spanish Summer sailing from Portsmouth, England to L'Orno, Italy, taking in Portugal, Sardinia and Corsica along the way.

The voyage departs 19 August and is reduced to AU\$2,434pp twin share.


See [www.swanhellenic.com.au](http://www.swanhellenic.com.au). 

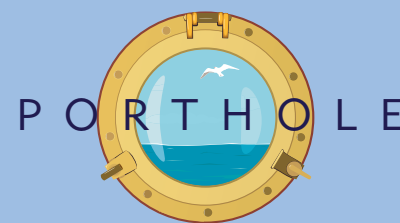
## Vive la France

TO CELEBRATE FRANCE'S NATIONAL DAY, BASTILLE Day (14 July), European canal boat operator, Le Boat, is including the complementary hire of two standard bikes for every booking made up until 21 July.

Guests who upgrade to a brand new Le Boat 1500 rental will enjoy the use of two free superior bikes whilst sailing.

"France is well known as a gastronomic & wine mecca, so we felt that to assist our clients keep in shape whilst they enjoy the canals and countryside of France a bike would be ideal," said Le Boat's Mark Windsor.

Visit your travel agent for details. 



THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE MEKONG.

For those of you that are young enough to remember the Regal Ice Cream company, it may excite you to learn that its 21<sup>st</sup> century incarnation has graduated from Aussie family freezers to reside on the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

The Regal brand of 50 years ago has all but disappeared, replaced by Bulla, which still makes Neapolitan ice cream from Regal's Colac plant, and it is this family favourite that can now be scooped up by cruisers onboard APTs eight-day Mekong River cruises between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap.

Lovers of the tri-colored treat can find Bulla's Neapolitan sitting alongside Vietnam's Vinamilk chocolate, coconut, vanilla, green bean, taro and durian varieties at a sundeck ice cream tasting on board *La Marguerite*.

To complement the trio guests can add local condiments including shredded ginger, dried plum, local cherry, cashew nut, peanut with milk and orange, blackberry and chocolate sauces to make dessert a true blending of cultures.

THE SKY IS NO LIMIT FOR COSTA.

Costa cruises spared no expense at the christening of its newest baby, the *Costa Favolosa*, opening celebrations to the entire city of Trieste.

Set to the backdrop of the Piazza Unità d'Italia, *Favolosa's* naming ceremony involved everything around the square, from the sea to buildings, and was also included in the official celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Italian Unification.

To add theatrics Costa not only took over the ocean but the sky, when a woman stole the show, swooping in on a cloud of white balloons.



Costa's flying high