

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 22 November 2011

Sydney cruise ships visits up 43%

More than 200 ships are bound for Australia's cruising gateway city over the coming months.

THE 2011/12 cruise season was officially launched on Friday by Sydney Ports Corporation Chief Executive Officer Grant Gilfillan, who announced the dramatic increase in ship visits this financial year – 214 vessel visits, compared to 150 last year.

"The cruise industry in Sydney is in an extraordinary growth phase and it doesn't look like slowing down," Gilfillan said.

"In fact 264 ship visits have already been booked for the following cruise season in 2012/13."

February 2012 will be the high point of the cruise season, with a new record of 33 ship visits, up from 27 in February 2011.

This summer will also see six ships – *Costa Deliziosa*, *Radiance of the Seas*, *Celebrity Century*, *Zaandam*, *Sea Princess* and *Discovery* – making their maiden visits to Sydney.

A plaque commemorating *Radiance of the Seas'* deployment to Sydney was presented on Friday by Sydney Ports.

Gilfillan said that the corporation would continue to work with the cruise industry to provide the services and infrastructure required to support the growth in cruise shipping.

"Sydney Ports will also undertake a significant upgrade of services and infrastructure needs at the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay over the next couple of years," he said.

"In addition, following an exhaustive consultation and planning stage, work will also begin on the new \$57 million terminal at White Bay, which will replace the temporary Wharf 5 terminal at Barangaroo."

Gillilan said the NSW Government welcomes the cruise industry's contribution to the state's economy.

"And we welcome the thousands of cruise passengers who are about to experience the excitement of entering the world's finest harbour."

Most of the ships docking at Sydney this summer will also call at other cities in Australia.

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 what ships are in call around the country this week.



Cruise Tip

Shore Excursions

Not all cruise lines include shore excursions in their pricing. This can be a double edged sword as it allows you to choose exactly how you want to spend your day, but it can also bulk up holiday bills and lead to inappropriate tour selection. Below are some tips to help you navigate shore tours.

- The first thing you need to do is work out a budget of exactly how much you are prepared to spend overall on day tours.
- Next look at the ports you will be visiting and work out if the ship will call close enough to the local attractions for you to explore them solo, or if they are further afield, whether you will need to join a tour.
- Have an internet search of the port which you are calling into to find out what are its highlights, or stand out activities? Can you do these solo, or do you need a tour?
- Finally an important factor to consider is mobility. If you are travelling with children or are less mobile, make sure you check what fitness level is required for each tour, as selecting an "active" tour if you are unable to undertake strenuous activity can ruin your port experience.

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Ask The Expert

with Anthony Haworth

THANK YOU to everyone who sent in questions for our new guest expert, Anthony Haworth, GM of Captain Cook Cruises.

This week is your last chance to send Anthony a question, so be sure to send your questions in to expert@cruiseweekly.com.au.

We'll be featuring a selection of questions received and Anthony's responses at facebook.com/cruiseweekly.

Q1 from Susannah in Bega, NSW: Susannah would like to know if land tours are included in the price of Captain Cook Cruises Fijian cruises? [f](#)

Q2 from John in Glenelg, SA: John has asked if formal attire is needed for evenings onboard Captain Cook Cruises Fijian voyages. [f](#)

Email your questions for Anthony to expert@cruiseweekly.com.au

Historic Antarctic season opens

This season features the last voyage of the 'heroic age' and has a unique Australian link.

A COMMEMORATIVE voyage has departed this week which will see the ashes of polar explorer Frank Wild reburied with his "boss" and friend, Sir Ernest Shackleton, in Grytviken, South Georgia, in the South Atlantic.

Chartered by One Ocean Expeditions, *Akademik Ioffe* is carrying the ashes, along with special guests including Wild's Australian grand and great-great nieces, Shackleton's granddaughter Alexandra, and British historian Angie Butler, who spent seven years tracking down the misplaced ashes in South Africa.

Australian expedition leader and travel writer/photographer, David McGonigal, is also onboard the 80-passenger ship for the funeral and cruise to the Falklands and Antarctic Peninsula.

"This will be the last voyage of the 'heroic age' of polar exploration," McGonigal said. "It ended in 1922 when Shackleton died, but this is unfinished business so it's the last tidying up."

McGonigal has visited Antarctica more than 100 times and was the first person to accomplish a seven-continent motorcycle ride when he rode on Antarctica at Argentina's Esperanza base in 1999.

He will work as an expedition leader on *Akademik Ioffe* for most of the season's sailings from Ushuaia.

McGonigal's voyage reports of the historic Antarctic trip will be posted "whenever ship communications allow" on his new blog on www.antarcticguide.com.

The full website will officially launch on 14 December, the centenary of Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen reaching the South Pole.



Eric Marshall, Frank Wild and Ernest Shackleton planting the British Flag in Antarctica in 1909.

A Princess in New England 2012

TWO Princess Cruises vessels, *Emerald Princess* and *Caribbean Princess*, will sail 11 voyages along the East Coast of America and Canada in 2012, offering guests to explore breathtaking and historic cities such as Boston and Quebec.

The duo will feature three itineraries, including a week-long roundtrip sailing from New York; a 10-day one-way voyage, sailing between New York and Quebec City and featuring an overnight stay in the French-Canadian city; and a 12-night Canada and Colonial America cruise from Quebec to Fort Lauderdale for a voyage along the entire eastern coastline.

"The natural beauty of this coastline mixed with the area's rich history makes Canada and New England one of our favourite cruise destinations," said Princess Cruises' Jan Swartz.

"Where else can you find such brilliant fall foliage, colonial landmarks, rugged beauty and quaint towns all in one voyage?" she added.

For more details see your travel agent.

Helen Wong's TOURS

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Did You Know?

Holland America Line

- ◆ Holland America Line was founded in 1873 as a passenger and shipping company under the title, the Netherlands-America Steamship Company, with one vessel, the original *Rotterdam*.
- ◆ Between the 1880's and 1920's HAL carried more than 10% of all emigrants travelling steerage from the "old world" to the "new world".
- ◆ The company's first-ever cruise holiday itinerary was undertaken in 1895, a short summer voyage from Rotterdam to Copenhagen and back, via the Kiel Canal.
- ◆ On 15 June 1896 the company officially changed its name to Holland Amerika Lijn.

The countdown begins...

TODAY marks exactly 12 months until the arrival of *Voyager of the Seas* down under.

Arriving in regional waters on 22 November 2012, *Voyager* is twice the size of most cruise ships currently based in Australia, carrying around 3,840 guests (more than the population of Port Douglas, Qld).

Voyager features 15 passenger decks, measures 311 metres long, and has 1,556 stunning staterooms.

"Australian cruising has grown remarkably in the last three years but we are delivering the greatest quantum leap when *Voyager of the Seas* arrives here in 12 months," said Adam Armstrong, commercial manager, RCL Cruises Australia.

"Cruising on *Voyager of the Seas* really is a destination in itself," Armstrong added.

When she arrives, *Voyager* will debut a five-month season out of Sydney and Fremantle, offering 12 New Zealand, South Pacific and Australia itineraries ranging from one to 18 nights, priced from \$1,409 for a 9-night South Pacific cruise.

For more details on *Voyager's* regional 2012-13 season, visit your local travel agent, or see www.royalcaribbean.com.au.



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Explore the Sea of Okhotsk

HAPAG-Lloyd Cruises has released a new Circumnavigation Sea of Okhotsk 2012 itinerary from Otaru in Japan to Petropavlosk in Russia.

Departing on 13 June 2012 the 17-day voyage takes guests through the "unknown" territory of the Sea of Okhotsk, with highlights including hiking across the grassland tundra, viewings of spectacular wildlife including fur seals, Steller's sea lions and Larga seals.

Guests will also have the opportunity to experience the majestic Kamchatka Peninsula, known as the land of volcanoes, geysers and bears.

For more details on the voyage see your local travel agent or visit www.hl-cruises.com.



WHAT better way to retire.

US television icon, Regis Philbin, of *Live! with Regis and Kelly* fame, is commencing his retirement after farewelling the TV show he spent 28 years on, onboard *Crystal Serenity's* 94-day World Cruise.

The "hardest working man in show business" farewelled viewers last week, and will board *Serenity* in March for her Hong Kong-to-Osaka cruise segment, as a guest speaker.

Not shy of a microphone Regis will regale guests with tales of his life and career, and will even host Q&A sessions where the audience gets the chance to turn the tables and interview him.

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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...



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 bargains!

19-nights – Spirit of Shackleton onboard MS Expedition

- **From:** \$14,363pp (for sale until 31 Dec)
- **Departs:** 11 January 2012
- **Visits:** Antarctic, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands (including explorations of former whaling stations and Shackleton's resting place, as well as glaciers and icebergs).
- **Includes:** All onboard meals, zodiac cruises, shore landings with an expert expedition team, Ushuaia airport transfer and an Antarctica guide book
- Phone 1300 320 795

Orion can't stop for a cup of tea

THE recent 'It's like having a cup of tea with God' marketing campaign from Orion Expedition Cruises has been so successful that all the company's available staff have been called in to field incoming enquiries.

The campaign has been further helped by the introduction of substantially reduced fares for sailings across the Kimberley, Vietnam, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Borneo, Antarctica and exciting new destinations such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and the islands of Micronesia.

The discounted fares include savings of 40% off Orion's six-night Bay of Islands voyage (departing 20 February 2012), six night Tasman Discoverer (departing 26 February 2012) and six-night Great Barrier Reef voyages (departing 03 March 2012), as well as 25% savings for the eleven-night PNG Cultural Highlights cruise (departing 09 and 20 March 2012).

The discounted fares are available for sale until 30 November, see your travel agent for a full list of discounted voyages, or **CLICK HERE**.

Sneak a peek at Crystal in 2014

CRYSTAL Cruises has released its earliest ever advance schedule for what it is calling it's "Inspired 2013 early 2014 Cruise Calendar".

The Calendar sees Crystal vessels call into 269 ports across 75 countries, for the 2013-14 May to May season, including more than a dozen maiden calls and 146 local overnight stays.

Crystal Symphony will spend the Northern summer months (June, July, August) in Northern Europe, followed by September, October and November in America, before rounding off 2013 in Antarctica.

In early 2014 *Symphony* will cruise to the South Pacific and Australia/NZ for seven Asia-centric voyages.

Meanwhile *Crystal Serenity* will spend April to December 2013 in the Mediterranean, before returning to North America for a Caribbean/Central America voyage, followed by a 2014 World Cruise.

Highlights of the season include a seven-, 12- and nine-day Mediterranean route rotation offering back to back combination possibilities with minimal repeat ports, as well as two- to three-day stays in 53 ports including Tokyo and Cape Town.

Despite the schedule launch, the cruise line has yet to release pricing details or open itineraries up for bookings.

Crystal has however said that the 2013-14 schedule will be open for bookings and price releases "shortly".



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>Rhapsody of the Seas (OPT)</i>	Thu 24 Nov
<i>Sea Princess (Barangaroo)</i>	Fri 25 Nov
<i>Zaandam (OPT)</i>	Fri 25 Nov
<i>Pacific Pearl (Barangaroo)</i>	Sun 27 Nov
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas (OPT)</i>	Sun 27 Nov
<i>Dawn Princess (Barangaroo)</i>	Mon 28 Nov

BRISBANE

<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Tue 22 Nov
<i>Pacific Sun</i>	Tue 29 Nov

BELL BAY

<i>Orion</i>	Sat 26 Nov
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HOBART

<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	Mon 28 Nov
<i>Orion</i>	Tue 29 Nov

AUCKLAND

<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Wed 23 Nov
<i>Sea Princess</i>	Sat 26 Nov

Earlybirds, time is running out

SCENIC Tours is reminding cruisers that there is less than one month left to book Earlybird specials for its European cruises and tours in 2012.

Earlybirds include free return flights to Europe with selected cruise/tours of 15-days or more, for bookings by 15 December 2011.

All inclusive fares on the 15 day Romantic Rhine & Moselle River Cruise from Amsterdam to Basel start from \$6,395 per person, twin share, with free return flights to Europe.

See your travel agent or visit scenictours.com.au for details.

Take the whole family to Bali

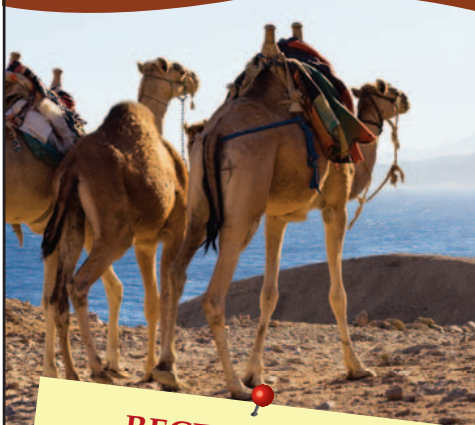
CLASSIC International Cruises is offering an extended family deal on its 11-night return voyage from Perth to Bali onboard its 550-passenger *Athena* departing 09 January 2012.

Priced from \$8,390 in total, the deal allows a family of four (kids under 18) plus two grandparents to cruise on the Bali voyage.

See www.classicintcruises.com for details.

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Massive liner once carried 12,000 passengers

By: Roderick Eime

Even as the band aboard RMS *Titanic* struck up their final rendition of "Nearer, My God, to Thee", the finishing touches of an even larger ocean liner were being added.

At 261m and more than 46,000 GRT, the *Titanic* and her sisters *Olympic* and *Britannic*, were about to be surpassed by the massive German vessel, *SS Imperator*, which would stretch to 276m and weigh an unheard-of 52,117 gross tons.

On her bow a massive bronze eagle figurehead was hurriedly installed to counter the new RMS *Aquitania* which would otherwise be 12 inches longer.

4,234 passengers could travel aboard her in four classes, with some 900 in first class alone.

Among her luxury appointments were a twin-deck swimming pool and Ritz-Carlton Restaurant, complete with orchestra.

Her four massive propellers ran smoothly and silently at a distance from the hull – a problem recognised in earlier designs that created worrying vibrations.

Her maiden voyage took place on 10 June 1913 and to much fanfare, she sailed out of Hamburg.

Despite the press acclaim and much chest-beating by her owners, the Hamburg America Line (HAPAG), there was trouble with the ship.

She sailed uncomfortably in heavy seas, swaying awkwardly from side to side and it turned out she was top heavy.

The unkind nickname of "Limperator" was soon applied.

In October she was back in the new AG Vulcan Hamburg shipyard for urgent remedial work which included stripping out the marble bathrooms, shaving three metres off the four funnels and replacing heavy furniture with wicker.

The most radical action was pouring 2,000 tons of concrete between

the double hull.

When she returned to service in March 1914, the route ahead looked promising, but came to an abrupt halt with the declaration of war.

HAPAG Director, Albert Ballin, had campaigned doggedly to avoid war, but events escalated during *Imperator's* July eastward crossing.

She made full steam for Hamburg and sat out the conflict under crude camouflage.

After the signing of the Armistice in November 1918, Germany was stripped of assets and territories, with the *Imperator* renamed USS *Leviathan* and going into service as a much-needed troopship.

On one journey she carried 12,000 passengers.

By August of 1919, her military duty was complete and she reverted to Britain, being renamed again.

From now until the end of her days, she would sail as RMS *Berengaria* with Cunard and White-Star.

There was more urgent work carried out in Liverpool and she did not return to service until July 1920, where Sir Arthur Rostron, the heroic former captain of the *Carpathia*, was assigned command.

The German-built vessel served as Cunard flagship until 1934 when, in a further twist of irony, she was replaced by another larger (291m) ex-German vessel, the former *SS Bismarck*.

Her final days were not bathed in glory and like other once magnificent liners, she suffered the ignominy of cut-price, prohibition-dodging cruises where she earned the new nickname "Bargain-Area".

In the end, her aging wiring was prone to catch fire and her owners retired her in 1938.

By 1946, her scrapping was complete.

For more detail on *SS Imperator*, see www.freewebs.com/ultimateimperator.



Imperator at anchor 1913



The massive bronze eagle on the bow



Picture of the brand new Imperator in 1913

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