

CRUISE



WEEKLY

Tuesday 20 September 2011

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Cruise Weekly's consumer issue today has six pages of the latest cruise news, as well as a full page from Small Ship Cruising (p7).

PLUS make sure you check out our brand new **Carnival Spirit** competition on p4.

Enjoy Small Ship Cruising

SMALL Ship Cruises focuses on ships from six to 150 cabins and features product from over 350 cruise suppliers, for more info see p7.

Healthy cruise children

CELEBRITY Cruises has partnered with The Nerdel Co to produce a new interactive childrens wellness program, centered around healthy choices.

Starring a puppet named Nerdel, the program will include puppet performances, workshops and lessons on the art of puppeteering for 'Shipmates' (kids aged three to five) and 'Cadets' (ages six to eight).

Healthy kids cooking classes, games and activities will also be on offer.

Summer season starts this week

Australia is set for inaugural seasons and maiden visits by ships in the Princess, Cunard, Seabourn, Holland America and P&O World Cruising fleets.

CABINS are still available on several cruises throughout Carnival Australia's record season, which will see 19 ships carrying more than 310,000 passengers between 21 September and mid-April 2012.

The most departures are scheduled from Sydney, including two new home-ported ships, *Zaandam* and *Sea Princess*, but other states are also preparing for a big six or seven months.

Leading the charge is *Sun Princess*, which arrives in Brisbane on Wednesday to begin Princess Cruises' first season in the state, also marking the first time an international ship has been based in Queensland.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly*, Jenny Lourey, Carnival Australia's senior vice president, said: "Queensland is getting everything – the *Queen Mary 2* is making maiden visits in Brisbane and Cairns, and the *Queen Elizabeth* is visiting Brisbane for the first time too.

"There is something happening every day on Sydney Harbour, and people in other states will have the opportunity to see ships they've never seen before, such as the *QM2*, which is circumnavigating Australia."

Carnival ships will make more than 300 calls to 24 different Australian ports.

Lourey said an unprecedented 11 Carnival ships are offering roundtrip voyages from Australian cities, with five more ships deployed for the season alongside the six ships already based here full-time.

Another eight ships will visit as part of their world cruising itineraries, including *Pacific Princess* and *Ocean Princess*; P&O's *Oriana*, *Aurora* and *Arcadia*, HAL's *Amsterdam* and Seabourn's *Odyssey*.

Dawn Princess is also offering cruises from Melbourne between 14 December 2011 and 8 April 2012.

"310,000 passengers is huge growth compared to our first season in 2004-05, when we had seven ships carrying a total of 103,000 passengers," said Lourey.

"It means there has never been a better time to select a cruise – we've got something for everyone."

Lourey confirmed that many cruises still had availability, especially on P&O and Princess around Christmas, New Year, February and March.

"Close to departure, we also expect to have some cancellations," she said.



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Ask The Expert

with Ann Sherry

THANK YOU to everyone who sent in questions for our first guest expert, Carnival Australia CEO, Ann Sherry.

Over the next month we'll be featuring a selection of questions received and Ann's responses at facebook.com/cruiseweekly.

For Ann's answers click on the Facebook link at the end of each question.

Q1 from Lynne Brissett:

Lynne Brissett wrote into **CW** to ask Ann about P&O's reasoning behind sending refurbished ships to homeport in Australia, rather than new vessels. [f](#)

Q2 from Julie Seiler:

Julie Seiler has asked for Ann's opinion on the belief that discounting cabins at the last minute may discourage guests from booking early. [f](#)

One Ocean expands its polar fleet

Soaring demand has led One Ocean Expeditions to expand its polar purchase, with *Akademik Sergey Vavilov* to join its fleet next year.

THE sistership to One Ocean Expeditions' (OOE) *Akademik Ioffe*, which the company acquired last year, *Vavilov* will commence expeditions in Antarctica in November 2012, followed by a 2013 Arctic season.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly** this week, Richard Mole of Active Travel, the Australian representative for OOE, said the acquisition was necessary as the 2011/12 season is almost completely sold out.

"We're screaming for berths in Sydney," he said, adding that Active Travel's office is constantly trying to secure more berths for Australian passengers who seemingly can't get enough of OOE's polar voyages.

According to Mole, between 20-50% of every OOE Antarctic voyage is occupied by Australians, a trend that does not seem to be slowing.

"Part of our popularity with Australians is that One Ocean employs a lot of ex-pat experts to accompany voyages, such as Melbourne born historian Ray McMahon," he said.

"Ultimately the company understands what Australians want," he added.

In terms of vessel selection Mole said that because of *Ioffe's* standing as "one of the best small expedition ships" OOE was very keen to secure her sistership and the company "simply kept badgering the Russians to get her".

"When you have one Michelangelo in your collection and you know there is another one out there, you just have to have it," he said.

Built in the 1980's for the Russian Academy of Science as a research vessel, *Vavilov* is almost identical to *Ioffe*, and features capacity for 105 passengers, however OOE will cap this at 92.

Prior to her inaugural OOE season, the ice-strengthened *Vavilov* will undergo an extensive refurbishment which will include a makeover of her cabins (with new soft furnishings, linen etc).

Changes to her cabin layout will mean that around 90% of cabins won't have shared toilet facilities.

The tasteful refurbishment will also include facelifts to the ship's public areas, and the addition of a wellness centre.

According to Mole, the company will

however retain some of the vessel's research vessel charm.

"Part of the appeal (of *Vavilov*) is that she is a research vessel built to spend her life in polar regions," he said.

"She will still give passengers the feeling of being on a research vessel, but with a lot more comfort," he added.

Whilst initially *Vavilov* will simply double capacity on existent *Ioffe* itineraries, Mole hinted that given OOE's track record for innovation, in time it is likely that the vessel will branch out with more of her own new itineraries.

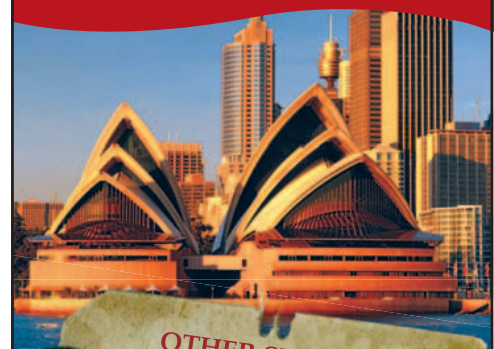


Akademik Sergey Vavilov

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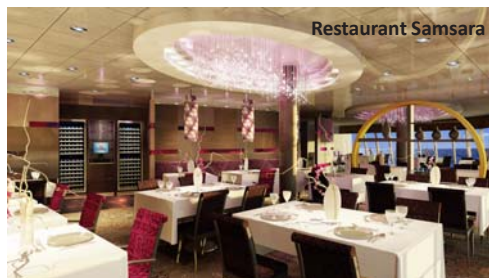
WWW.SWANHELLENIC.COM.AU

Costa previews its neoRomantica side

FOLLOWING last week's announcement that Costa Cruises will sail from Melbourne in 2012-13, exclusively revealed by *Cruise Weekly*, the company has released imagery of the new ship heading our way.

Costa neoRomantica is set to be completely overhauled to create new areas, including a wine and cheese bar, cabaret and nightclub, and 111 additional cabins.

Pictured below is the Restaurant Samsara, part of the 4,000 square metre wellness area including a gym, sauna, Turkish bath, beauty



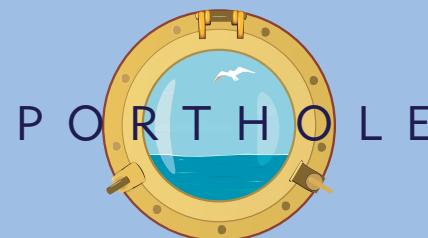
treatment rooms, 50 spa cabins and six spa suites.

Also pictured (below) is the Monte Carlo lido bar, an outdoor relaxation area with private cabanas.

Previously named *Costa Romantica*, the transformed *neoRomantica* will have four restaurants, including two reservation-only venues, and a pizzeria and grill area; four bars; a coffee and chocolate café; two Jacuzzis and two swimming pools; a lido deck with cabanas; jogging path; casino; Virtual World; internet point; and Squok Club for kids.

According to Costa, the interior design will be "elegant, sophisticated and refined" to appeal to Australian tastes.

See www.costacruise.com.au/neoromantica.



WOULDN'T have happened if they had just sailed on *Volendam's* 2011 RWC cruise.

A South African couple who travelled to New Zealand for the Rugby World Cup, found themselves at a loose end after they mistakenly booked into the Majestic Hotel, in Sussex UK.

Instead of the "splendid pier views" promised on the website, the pair arrived in Eastbourne NZ only to circle around the suburb lost as their GPS tried its hardest to get them to the hotel.

Eventually the pair stopped at the town's local pharmacy where they found there was no hotel in the suburb at all.

The helpful pharmacy assistant, Linda Burke, also discovered the couple's mistake in country, and tried in vain to book them into one of the town's many B&Bs.

Unfortunately due to Rugby World Cup fever there was no room anywhere.

Burke, seeing the couple's plight, then offered them a room at her own house for the night, for which they were greatly appreciative and took her up on.

Fire devastates Hurtigruten

LAST Thursday morning a fire ripped through Hurtigruten's *MS Nordlys*, killing two crew members and hospitalising a further four.

The fire was detected at 9.17am as *Nordlys* approached the Norwegian port of Ålesund, all 207 guests were safely evacuated soon after and transported to Ålesund.

Investigations are currently underway into the cause of the tragedy, and so far the cruise line has remained tight lipped on the details.

At present all the cruise line has said is that it is focusing on organising repatriation travel for all passengers.

"Our deepest condolences go out to all those touched by this terrible incident," said Country Director of Discover the World Marketing (Australian Hurtigruten representative), Birgit Eisbrenner.

"Our thoughts are with the friends and families of those lost to this devastating accident, along with those who continue to face the aftermath of the ordeal," she added.



Silversea's Grand Voyage

SILVERSEA has released details of a 59-day Grand Voyage from Singapore to Monte Carlo in March 2012, onboard the 382-guest *Silver Whisper*.

Departing on 3 March, the voyage stops at Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong and Shanghai in China; Haiphong (Hanoi), Ha Long Bay, Chan May (Hue/Danang) and Nha Trang in Vietnam; Thailand's Bangkok and Ko Samui; Port Klang (Kuala Lumpur) and Penang in Malaysia.

Leaving Asia *Whisper* will spend three days at sea before calling at Cochin, Mormugao and Mumbai in India; Fujairah and Dubai in the UAE; Khasab and Muscat in Oman; Safaga, Egypt; Aqaba (gateway to Petra) in Jordan; the Egyptian ports of Sharm El Sheikh and Alexandria, and Sorrento in Italy, before reaching her final destination of Monte Carlo on 01 May 2012.

Fares start from AU\$35,608pp, including an Onboard Spending Credit of US\$2,500.

Shorter sectors are also available, see your travel agent for details.

Explore YOUR WORLD

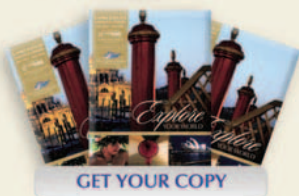
THIS WEEK'S FEATURE CRUISE

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Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY

Pacific Pearl Tue 20 Sep
Pacific Jewel Mon 26 Sep

FREMANTLE

Dawn Princess Fri 23 Sep

DARWIN

Coral Princess Thu 22 Sep
Coral Princess Fri 23 Sep
Sun Princess Tue 27 Sep

BROOME

Pacific Sun Mon 26 Sep

BRISBANE

Sun Princess Wed 21 Sep
Pacific Dawn Sat 24 Sep
Orion Mon 26 Sep

CAIRNS

Orion Wed 21 Sep

Gauguin lined up for a refurb

PAUL Gauguin Cruises has scheduled its fourteen year old *Paul Gauguin* in for a \$7 million renovation in January 2012.

The largest renovations ever to take place on *Gauguin* will include new carpeting, refinished furniture, new fabrics, new teak balcony railings, decorative side panels around windows and new bathroom tiles for all suites and staterooms.

Other refurbishments include new flooring and replaced carpeting, elegant new furniture, new window treatments and decorative wall panels, and new signage throughout the ship, designed to provide "a lighter, brighter feel".

Gauguin's La Veranda will also boast a redesigned entrance, refinished indoor and outdoor furniture and solar shades throughout; whilst Le Grill will feature new decorative partitions and divider walls, a new buffet area and new lighting, and L'Etoile will feature a redesigned entrance in addition to new video equipment for conferences.

Upgrades to Deck 5 are set to include a new built-in banquette and an expanded Le Casino, whilst Le Grand Salon will offer a refurbished dance floor, and on Deck 6 a new integrated display case for books and art will be installed.

American Spirit in Alaska

AMERICAN Cruise Lines (ACL) 100-passenger *American Spirit* has been scheduled to operate in Alaska commencing in June next year.

The six-year-old *Spirit* will offer several different seven- and 11-night Alaskan itineraries, including round trip cruises departing from Juneau, Alaska, and one-way cruises between Juneau and Seattle, Washington.

"Our passengers are going to experience Alaska like they never have before in the comfort of the *American Spirit*," said Paul Taiclet, VP of Hotel Operations, ACL.

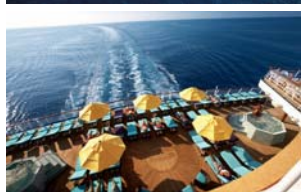
Cruise for lovers of opera

INSPIRED by the upcoming La Traviata opera, set to be performed on a floating stage on Sydney Harbour near the Botanic Gardens, Cruise Express has packaged up a two-night Captain Cook voyage with tickets to see the opera.

The production will feature a 40-piece orchestra, whilst the voyage onboard *Explorer* is tailored to opera lovers and takes guests to all corners of Sydney Harbour.

The package is priced from \$899pp, see www.cruiseexpress.com.au.

WIN A 9-NIGHT CRUISE FOR TWO PEOPLE TO NEW CALEDONIA



With just over 12 months to go before the launch of *Carnival Spirit* into Australia, **Carnival Cruise Lines** has teamed up with **Cruise Weekly** to give one lucky reader the chance to be one of the first people to cruise on the newest and largest ship to call Australia home year-round.

This amazing prize includes a nine night cruise for two people to New Caledonia (departing Sydney on 27 November 2012) in a balcony stateroom on board *Carnival Spirit*.

Carnival Spirit, the first Carnival vessel to call Sydney home, will carry 2,667 passengers and will offer a range of onboard facilities and features such as 16 bars and lounges; pools, whirlpools and spas; Carnival's signature WaterWorks with a splashpark and two waterslides; a mini golf and sports court; fitness centre; a full schedule of shipboard activities; meals and snacks; spectacular stage shows, live entertainment and lots more.

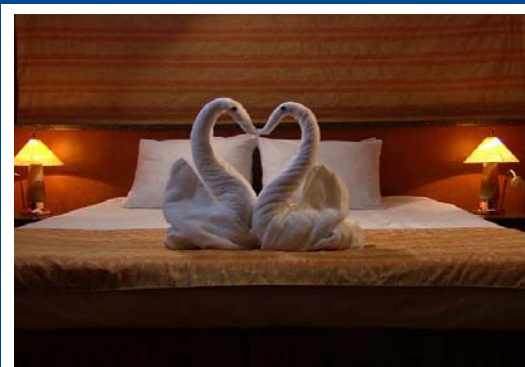
Every Tuesday over the next eight weeks *Cruise Weekly* will publish a different photo depicting a feature from the upcoming *Carnival Spirit*, with the first photo featured to the right.

To be in the running to win, you must –

1. Like **Cruise Weekly's** Facebook Page by clicking here 
2. Post a quirky caption that you think best represents this photo in the comments section under the photo of the week (on the **Cruise Weekly** Facebook Page)
3. You must also email your caption and contact details to: carnivalspirit@cruiseweekly.com.au

For more about *Carnival Spirit* and its debut into Sydney next October, visit www.carnival.com.au

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Carnival CRUISE WEEKLY

Yacht Club admits females

MSC Cruises has recruited its first female butlers, to serve guests in the exclusive MSC Yacht Club.

The female butlers will join male counterparts in traditional livery, and have all received extensive butler training.

Speaking about her new position, MSC butler, Larysa Fedoruk said "I really appreciate how MSC enables all its people to achieve their full potential".

"Becoming an MSC butler has allowed me to experience the satisfaction of tuning in to our guests' habits and preferences to provide that special level of service," she added.

Japanese culinary adventure

ORION II is inviting guests to come onboard for an eight-night Japanese culinary adventure, departing on 27 April next year,

Priced from \$7,490pp (or \$5,990pp if booked by 30 November 2011), the voyage will be accompanied by special guest chef Hideo Dekura who will teach guests how to prepare and present a range of the world's favourite Japanese dishes such as sushi.

Onshore excursions include visits to the markets where the locals shop, including the famous Jalgachi Fish Market in Busan.

For information, see your travel agent or visit www.orionexpeditions.com.

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!

10 night – Winter on the Danube voyage onboard *Viking Legend* or *Viking Prestige*

- **From:** \$2,099pp twin share
- **Departs:** 17 December 2011
- **Visits:** Nuremberg, Kelheim, Regensburg, Passau, Linz & Salzburg, Melk, Durnstein, Vienna, Esztergom & Budapest
- **Includes:** cruise, nine guided tours, all onboard meals, port charges and gratuities
- See www.vikingrivercruises.com.au

Port Review: Kitava, Trobriand Islands, PNG

Today's Port Review comes to you courtesy of Orion Expedition Cruises.

VISITED on Orion Expedition Cruises' Papua New Guinea expeditions, the Trobriand Islands are a rarely seen 250 km² archipelago of coral atolls situated off the eastern coast of Papua New Guinea.

Most of the population of 12,000 indigenous inhabitants live on the main island of Kiriwina, with small population groups on Kaileuna, Vakuta & Kitava.

The island group is considered to be an important tropical rainforest eco-region in need of conservation.

The indigenous people of the area are mostly subsistence horticulturalists living in traditional settlements, with a social structure based on matrilineal clans who control land and resources.

Locals still participate in the regional circuit of exchange of shells called kula, sailing in seagoing canoes to visit trade partners on other islands.

In the late twentieth century, anti-colonial and cultural autonomy movements gained followers from the Trobriand societies.

When inter-group warfare was forbidden by colonial rulers, the islanders developed a unique, aggressive form of cricket.

Although an understanding of reproduction and modern medicine is widespread in Trobriand Society, their traditional beliefs have been remarkably resilient.

The real cause of pregnancy is always a baloma, who is inserted into or enters the body of a woman, and without whose existence a woman could not become pregnant.

Authentic Trobriand Islands carvings are highly sought after and here you will find a selection of exquisite quality and variety.

Many guests fall in love with the local Bagi shell necklaces and return to the ship proudly displaying their latest purchases around their necks.

Exploring the island cruisers can see local gardens with crops of taro, yam, banana and breadfruit, the staples of the islanders.

Nearing the village you will see a traditional Trobriand Yam House and once inside the village there are many more.

Just near the far end of the village is the grave of the recently deceased Chief of Kitava.

The simple memorial is prominently positioned on the main path through the village.

A short Zodiac trip and you arrive at Nuratu Island.

Orion's expedition team has found this a good snorkeling area with conditions invariably perfect, water cool and inviting, and many brightly coloured fish among wide expanses of coral.



Cruising key to breaking the rut

IN the lead-up to the arrival of *Carnival Spirit* in Sydney in October 2012, Carnival Cruise Lines (CCL) is offering Australians the chance to win some unique experiences, including a cruise to the Pacific Islands.

The campaign follows a study, commissioned by the cruise line, that indicates many Australians are lacking a spirit of adventure.

According to the nationwide survey of more than 1,000 people, 74% wear the same style of clothing; 59% eat same meals every day and socialise at the same places every weekend; and over two thirds always sleep on the same side.

Almost all (92%) believe that being open to new things is good, but nearly one-third said they can't afford to break out of their routine or that family limits their choices.

The CCL study also shows that many people dream about travelling around the world (41%) and getting away from it all by themselves (35%).

"We recognise that Aussies have an adventurous spirit, which is just one of the reasons we decided to bring our cruise experience to this market," said Jennifer Vandekreeke, director, CCL Australia.

"The findings show that Aussies are clearly looking for a little help to rediscover and celebrate that spirit.

"Over the next few weeks, we'll be inviting the nation to try something new every day, however big or small."

TV personality Tom Williams is the face of the new campaign.

For details, visit Carnival Cruise Lines Facebook page www.facebook.com/carnivaloz.

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Orion II: Breathless adventure in the lap of luxury

By: Amanda Collins

SAPPHIRE blue stretches endlessly beneath me, broken in parts by shimmering silver fish suddenly struck by shafts of sunlight. And the rhythmic sound of my own breath, as I swim alone off the reef's edge. A darker shade rises from the depths, mushroom blue. An ominous blob getting bigger and bigger below my body. Should I panic? It's probably too late for that, plus the expedition guide Mick said that there was no danger of sharks here. But that's all well and good until you see a dark shape rising speedily from the ocean floor and fistfuls of Jaws nightmares flood into focus. Still I stay, weightless on the surface as the splotch takes shape. Blue turns to green, and the blob's edges round and solidify, and I come face to shell with an endangered green sea turtle.

I knew I was in for a once in a lifetime journey when I signed up for *Orion II*'s first foray into Borneo, but what I didn't expect was just how much of a non-stop luxury adventure I was in for.

Departing roundtrip from Kota Kinabalu, *Orion II*'s journey took guests up and around the 'dog's head' of Sabah (so called for its shape) which makes up the north-eastern (Malaysian) tip of Borneo.

The first port of call was the tax free island of Labuan where \$5 bottles of vodka were snapped up, and the often heartbreaking WWII history of the island was revealed through a tour which took guests to where the allied armies landed to retake the island from Japanese forces, the site of the official Japanese surrender and the hauntingly peaceful Allied war cemetery, where boys from all over the world rest in the warm earth.

From Labuan *Orion II* travelled to the Klias Wetlands where zodiacs took us down salted rivers carved into thick mangrove jungle, and we watched as bramine kites set against an Indian blue sky circled, and long tailed macaques studied us from between silvered branches in the dying afternoon light.

In Palau Tiga (the original Survivor Island), we trekked from a white sanded beach ringed with palms into dense rainforest to slide into

opaque brown, sloppy and surprisingly buoyant mud pools, warmed by a volcano; whilst in Kudat we mingled with the Rungas tribe, exploring their wooden longhouses, watching traditional dances and enjoying the friendly hospitality of a former headhunting tribe.

Sandakan saw us once again confronted with Australian war history, as the families of the soldiers who died in the horrific WWII Death Marches told their story at the official memorial service for the fallen.

Along the dog's snout we entered the Kinabatangan River for two nights of slack-jaw gasping wildlife experiences, watching from misted morning canoes as the buzzing jungle awoke, and crocodiles slid silently under caramel coloured water, whilst noisy orangutans swung from tree branches clutching fuzzy red balding babies, moving further into the pulsating heart of the wild.

The adventure was not however just land bound, and the coral reefs of Palau Mantanani and Palau Matakong were a feast for snorkeler and scuba diving eyes, as vistas of bulbous hard coral bloomed from the ocean floor and ethereal tendrils of soft coral colored in reds, purples, blues, pinks, whites, browns and greens, played home to literally thousands of brightly coloured fish.

And it was here, off the edge of this waterworld, in Mantanani's deep blue on the last cruise call, that I swam with a wandering green sea turtle and watched as it casually turned its head to snap up delicate jelly fish.

Walking through the door to *Orion II*'s reception area from my dive, a crew member greets me with a cold glass of tropical juice, condensation runs down my sun-pinkened sweaty hand, and he asks me "how was your trip?". I look at him somewhat confounded for the answer, my salt water sloshed brain floundering like a fish on the shore, my mouth in mimicry of its gasping for the right words, and I find I don't have any. I can't do justice to what I saw, except to tell him "You should have been there".



Green sea turtle



Orion II



Travelling down the Kinabatangan

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PO Box 428, West Ryde, NSW 1685

Phone: 1300 799 220 Fax: 1300 799 221

Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper

Editor: Louise Goldsbury

Assistant Editor: Amanda Collins

Contributors: Roderick Eime, Chantel Long and Lisa Maroun

Email: info@cruiseweekly.com.au

Cruise Weekly is part of the CRUISE WEEKLY

Travel Daily Group:

Advertising and Marketing: Lisa Maroun (Manager), Lisa Martin and Magda Herdzik

Email: advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper

Email: accounts@traveldaily.com.au



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SMALLSHIPCRUISES

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