

CRUISE



WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

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

PLUS check out **p7** for some fantastic Star Cruises deals, and make sure you check out this week's *Carnival Spirit* comp on **p3**.

Viking's Expert takes the reins

FROM next week Viking River Cruises' Managing Director Australia & New Zealand, Teresia Fors, will take over as the Expert in *Cruise Weekly's* Ask the Expert feature.

Viking River Cruises is the world's largest river cruise company and offers scenic cruises along the rivers of Europe, Russia and China.

Readers who have questions about river cruising and/or Viking River Cruises should email them into expert@cruiseweekly.com.au, and over the month of October Teresia will endeavour to address as many as she can.

Jade and Spirit for drydock

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's *Norwegian Spirit* has entered drydock for a 13-day makeover which will include installing wireless internet shipwide; new flat screen TVs and upgrades in staterooms; new carpeting; and enhancements to the Stardust Theatre, spa, fitness centre and Raffles Court.

Meanwhile *Norwegian Jade* will enter drydock for 11 days where her hull will be painted and her Paniolo's Tapas and Salsa restaurant will be replaced with a Brazilian steakhouse.

RCL in Port Canaveral to 2015

ROYAL Caribbean has signed an agreement to have a Freedom-class sized vessel in Port Canaveral, Florida, until 2015.

Floods in Cambodia impact cruises

For the first time, Mekong river cruising has been affected by severe flooding in the region.

ARRIVING in Siem Reap on the weekend to review APT's new *AmaLotus*, *Cruise Weekly* has been witness to the extensive flooding which has caused pre-cruise land tours and Mekong itineraries to be altered.

Locals say the flood is the worst in ten years, with the river overflowing into the town centre and surrounding provinces.

Also participating in the trip, APT general manager Chris Hall said: "This is the first time this has ever happened."

But he said there would be minimal effect on the cruise segment of the itinerary, which started yesterday.

Instead of a 40-minute port transfer to Tonle Sap on Monday, passengers took a four-hour drive to Kampong Chhnang, where the ship was relocated due to high-water levels and inaccessible roads.

Most shore activities went ahead in alternative venues or at different times, with many travellers praising APT for its handling of the situation.

The historic event also allowed a bonus 45-minute "flood tour" to see downtown Siem Reap from the safety of a 30-seat bus.

Hall said other companies' vessels, which are taller than the *AmaLotus*, may face problems sailing under bridges along the Mekong.

A Pandaw Cruises spokesman said no ships were able to pass under the bridge outside Phnom Penh to go across Lake Thonle Sap to Siem Reap.

Some tour companies, such as Exotissimo Travel, shut down operations in Siem Reap and grouped all clients together into one tour.

Conditions are expected to ease by the end of the week.

The flooding in Cambodia has left at least 58 people dead and 6,000 families have been evacuated from their homes to higher ground.

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WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011



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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.

This week is the last week that Ann will be answering reader questions.

For Ann's answers click on the Facebook link at the end of each question or visit facebook.com/cruiseweekly.

Q1 from Bob Rose:

Bob Rose has asked Ann if there has been any decision on the possibility of introducing express cruises to Europe.

Q2 from Richard and Jackie:

Richard and Jackie would like to know if P&O would consider adding some of its current pay-as-you-go restaurants into the cruise price, in similar fashion to Princess Cruises.

Ponant orders expedition yacht

Compagnie du Ponant is building a luxurious 132-cabin ship to debut in June 2013.

THE world's only French cruise line has announced plans to add a "latest generation" €100m yacht to its fleet.

As a sister ship to *Le Boréal* and *L'Austral*, launched in May 2010 and April 2011 respectively, the new vessel will be the fifth cruise yacht in the Ponant fleet.

The six-deck 264-passenger vessel will measure 142 metres in length, with an 18-metre beam and a cruising speed of 16 knots.

Almost all (95%) of the staterooms and

suites will have a balcony.

The company said the order was a positive sign confirming its "exclusive positioning and development on the international scene".

Véronique Saadé, deputy executive vice-president, commented: "In keeping with our concept of cruising, we are again favouring the intimate, friendly environment of a human-size ship, ensuring our passengers receive individual attention and a personalised service in an outstanding environment."

Next year, Compagnie du Ponant expects to carry more than 20,000 passengers to destinations including Antarctica and Greenland.

One in two passengers in 2011 is a new customer for Ponant, while one in four is trying a cruise holiday for the first time.

For details, call Travel the World on 1300 950 622, or visit your local travel agent.

Vancouver port sighting

THANK-YOU to the numerous eagle-eyed **CW** readers who picked up the wrong 'Seattle Port' caption below the Vancouver Port photo on page 5 of **CW's** 13 September issue.

NCL has luxury transfers online

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has partnered with GroundLink to allow passengers to book private luxury transportation to and from its cruise ships.

GroundLink is the first online and mobile private car service, and the NCL partnership allows guests to book a variety of transfer options online from airport or home to pier and vice versa, as part of the cruise booking process.

The transfers can be booked up to an hour before departure, with transport options including town cars, SUVs and limousines.

See your travel agent or visit www.ncl.com for details.

Giveaway



giving readers the chance to win a **weekend cruise to nowhere for two people**.

One lucky winner will cruise onboard Classic International Cruises' *Athena* in an ocean view cabin. The cruise will depart from Fremantle on Sat 18 Feb, and return to Fremantle on Mon 20 Feb 2012.

For your chance to win this great prize, send in your answer to the question below by Fri 30 Sep to: comp@cruiseweekly.com.au

Visit www.classicintcruises.com and describe in 50 words what you would like about a cruise aboard the classic-styled *Athena*.

Click here for terms & conditions

The winner will be announced in **CW** on 4 Oct.



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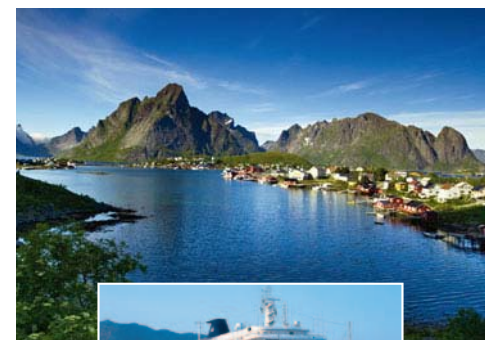


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CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011



New oil spill penalties

THE penalty for the discharge of oil or oil residues by ships in Australian waters has been increased from \$1 million to \$11 million, due to the introduction of changes to the Navigation Act and Protection of the Seas Act.

The changes are designed to deter ships from engaging in unsafe and irresponsible actions at sea, particularly near sensitive marine ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef.

Be prepared for a lot of light

NORWEGIAN cruising specialist Hurtigruten is urging cruisers who are considering a 2012 Arctic cruise to get in quick, as NASA has predicted that next year will see the strongest Northern Lights activity in 50 years.

Generally a "solar maximum" peak happens every 11 to 12 years, however 2012 will be stronger than any peak in the last half century.

The best time for spotting the Northern Lights is in late autumn and winter, and seven of Hurtigruten's ships sail to these areas on a daily basis, offering voyages ranging in length from four to 12-days.

Earlybird specials are currently available on selected departures, see your travel agent or call 1800 623 267 for more information.

Safari Endeavour savings

AMERICAN Safari Cruises is celebrating the launch of *Safari Endeavour*, by offering a travel credit of \$200pp for bookings aboard the 86-guest *Safari Endeavour* in Alaska from May through September 2012, if made before 30 November 2011.

Cruises featured in the deal include the week-long Discoverers' Glacier Country itinerary from \$4,795 and the two-week Famed Inside Passage voyage from Seattle departing 27 May and priced from \$6,095pp.

"The travel credit is intended to help guests with airfares," said Tim Jacox, executive vice president of sales and marketing.

"It's our gift to guests booking the *Safari Endeavour* which we've recently added to our fleet," he added.

See your travel agent for details.

Disney says Aloha to Hawaii

DISNEY Cruise Line has announced that it will add a second Hawaii cruise to its 2012 schedule, onboard its newest ship *Disney Fantasy*.

The move is due to "overwhelming response" to its first Hawaiian itinerary, with the new 14-night voyage set to depart from LA on 14 Oct 2012.

See your travel agent for details.



THE scourge of the seven seas, on land.

Captain Jack Sparrow's *Black Pearl* has been created in car format by a crew of four tourists travelling through Europe.

The *Black Pearl*, manned by three passengers and one driver dressed in pirate outfits, was spotted and apprehended by police in Brunenthal, Germany.

Pearl additions to the car included full wooden cladding, a wheelhouse, galley and mast, which were given the all clear by the police after the pirates presented them with a road safety certificate for all modifications.

"We wished them a safe voyage and allowed them to continue on their way," a police spokesperson said.



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.

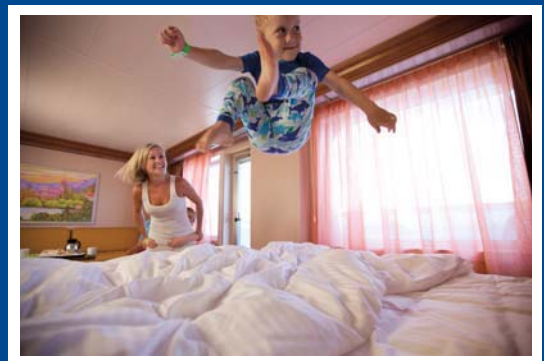
Every Tuesday over the next eight weeks *Cruise Weekly* will publish a different photo depicting a feature from the upcoming *Carnival Spirit*, with the second photo featured to the right.

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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WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011



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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 Thu 29 Sep
Volendam Tue 04 Oct

FREMANTLE

Pacific Sun Fri 30 Sep

DARWIN

Sun Princess Tue 27 Sep
Oceanic Discoverer Thu 29 Sep
Oceanic Discoverer Fri 30 Sep

MELBOURNE

Dawn Princess Fri 30 Sep

BRISBANE

Pacific Dawn Sat 01 Oct

BURNIE

Dawn Princess Sat 01 Oct

HOBART

Dawn Princess Sun 02 Oct

Under 100 days to the Village

IT took more than 61,000 man hours to create but it is finally finished, Abu Dhabi's Volvo Ocean Race Destination Village.

Set to host two weeks worth of activities as part of the third leg stopover of the Volvo Ocean Race between 31 December 2011 and 14 January 2012, the Destination Village will be open free of charge to the public and features seven permanent yacht pontoons to give spectators up-close access to the Volvo Ocean Race fleet.

Hurtigruten Nordlys update

HURTIGRUTEN has announced that whilst all departures of *Ms Nordlys* have been cancelled until mid October due to her tragic engine room fire which killed two crew members earlier in the month (**CW** 20 Sep), her winter schedule from 01 November to 31 December 2011 will not be affected.

"Hurtigruten wishes to thank all those involved during the last few days for their impressive contribution, guests for their great patience and understanding and crew members along with rescue workers, for their professionalism and courage during the rescue operation," Hurtigruten said.

Cruise Tip

Finding your perfect cruise

Making sure you pick the right ship is one of the biggest deciding factors as to whether you will enjoy your experience or not. Here's some tips to help you in your quest.

- Where is it you would like to travel to? Once you know your destination you will be able to narrow down the cruise lines that specialise in cruising that region.
- Once you know the cruise lines you are looking at, you need to decide what ship vibe you are looking for: family friendly, adventure focused, pure relaxation, romantic, party, old world elegance, activity filled or education oriented.
- Once you have narrowed down destination and ambiance, you should look at the demographic of the ships- will you be happy travelling with these people as your shipboard company?
- Lastly, you need to look at ship size and features. A good idea is to go to the cruise line's website and have a look at the ship specifications and photos.

European travel & expo 2011

Meet the European Travel Experts

Over 40 leading Europe Tour Operators, Wholesalers, Cruise companies, Airlines and Tourist Offices have joined forces to bring you the best of Europe under one roof. Discover a huge range of European travel opportunities and alternatives - everything from Portugal to Prague, the Dordogne to Dubrovnik, Britain to the Balkans and Tuscany to Turkey.

Our European experts will be there to directly answer all your questions and offer sensible planning, travel hints and advice. You will get a much clearer picture of what is really available with ideas, advice, products and services that are often of better value and distinctly different to those offered by the large main stream companies.

Come and meet us in October, and find exclusive travel deals, fascinating destination seminars and your chance to win a trip for two to Europe!*

Entry 10am-3pm, by gold coin donation with proceeds to the Smith Family

Brisbane Sunday 2 October

Sofitel Hotel, 249 Turbot Street, Brisbane
(located above Central Railway Station)

Melbourne Sunday 9 October

Sofitel Hotel, 25 Collins Street, Melbourne

Sydney Sunday 23 October

Sofitel Sydney Wentworth
61-101 Phillip Street, Sydney

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CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011

CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Did You Know?

Disney Cruise Line

- ◆ The Disney ships are painted in Mickey Mouse inspired colours: black hull, white superstructure, yellow trim and two giant red funnels, each with the Disney Cruise Line Mickey Mouse logo.
- ◆ Disney Cruise Line ships use the iconic first seven notes of the "When You Wish Upon A Star" melody for their horn signals.
- ◆ Disney ships are the only cruise ships in the world to have four captains: the ship's captain, Captain Mickey, Captain Hook and Captain Jack Sparrow.
- ◆ Disney Cruise Line was the first cruise line to have yellow lifeboats rather than the regulation orange ones.

Heroes: First marathon at sea

A 57-year old British man, Steve Eaton, has completed the world's first-ever marathon at sea, onboard Princess Cruises' *Grand Princess*.

No stranger to a long run, Eaton has clocked up 33 marathons, with his latest at-sea effort in aid of the Help for Heroes charity (which provides support to those wounded, sick or injured in the line of duty since 9/11).

The epic 42km run took place over the weekend on the Promenade Deck's 600 metre course and took over 70 laps, five hours, 16 minutes and 45 seconds to complete.

"This has probably been my hardest marathon to date but it was for a very special cause and I'm grateful for all the support of the passengers and crew onboard to keep me going," said Eaton upon crossing the finish line.

"Everyone at Princess Cruises is very proud that *Grand Princess* could host the first marathon at sea," said Jan Swartz, Princess Cruises executive vice president.

"Our passengers and crew were really behind Steve's attempt and it was wonderful that so many of them came out on deck to cheer him on.

"Help for Heroes does fantastic work and we hope that Steve's efforts have raised lots of money for this worthwhile charity," she added.

Pictured from left is Deputy Cruise Director Stuart McGunigall, Steve Eaton and *Grand Princess* Captain Tony Herriott.



Shipping chart updates

AUSTRALIAN and New Zealand maritime authorities have said they are considering updating navigational charts of the South Pacific, some of which were made by early European sailors.

The move would involve new hydrographic surveys of key shipping routes to update the old paper charts, and would see the new maps meet international deadlines for the mandatory transition to electronic navigation.

The move has garnered the support of industry heavyweights including Carnival Australia, who say the new surveys would provide the region's cruise industry with a solid foundation.

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!

13 night – New Zealand voyage onboard *Dawn Princess* (roundtrip from Melbourne)

- **From:** \$1,509pp twin share
- **Departs:** 14 December 2011
- **Visits:** Fiordland National Park NZ, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Napier, Tauranga (for Rotorua) and Auckland
- **Includes:** cruise, onboard meals, nightly entertainment, use of shipboard facilities and bonus onboard credit of up to \$150 per cabin (on selected categories)
- See www.esecruising.com.au

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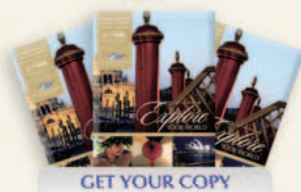
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WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 September 2011



Review: Azamara Journey in the Adriatic

By: Louise Goldsbury

On the *Azamara Journey* I met an American man on his fourth back-to-back cruise. He had originally booked for a week but kept extending to the next sailing as he simply could not miss the upcoming ports of call.

When it comes to dream itineraries in Europe, Azamara Club Cruises is hard to beat.

My Adriatic Coast voyage covered Sorrento, Italy (where I hopped on a ferry to Capri); Dubrovnik, Croatia; the Greek island of Corfu; Taormina, Sicily; and an overnight stay in Venice. No dud days!

The following cruise's destinations were just as idyllic: Split, Montenegro, Crete, Santorini and Athens.

The week after that, I took in Turkey, Mykonos, Rhodes, Jerusalem and Haifa; then Spain, Monte Carlo and the south of France.

I understood why this man, freshly retired, had trouble getting off.

Neither could I fault the onboard features, facilities or crew.

The 32,000-tonne *Journey*, like its sister *Azamara Quest*, carries less than 700 passengers: enough to mingle with, but not too many to feel lost in the crowd. Travelling solo, I met people as easily as I would on a much smaller ship. Perhaps it was the Mediterranean climate or the great days out on shore, but everyone was in an exceedingly good mood (strangely not always the case on holidays).

Suite Surprise

I was lucky enough to be upgraded to a suite, for the first time, and can highly recommend this option for anyone who can afford it.

Special mention to Sooria, my butler, who offered the best service I have ever had on a cruise (or anywhere on land, for that matter). He deserves a medal for his efforts, all delivered with genuine friendliness.

Dining in my room, with each course served individually, my wine

poured and topped up, and the added touch of candles and music to enhance the ambience – it was an absolute treat that I indulged in twice.

The Prime C steakhouse and Aqualina seafood restaurant were both well worth the \$25

surcharge (free for suite guests) and definitely in my top five meals at sea.

Even in the buffet, the waiters

remembered passengers' names and fussed over them. This does not happen on every cruise line.

The excellent service extended all the way to the gym where the instructor, from New Zealand, added a cycling class to suit four Australian passengers who said they preferred mornings to afternoons.

"My butler offered the best service I have ever had on a cruise."

Younger Passengers

The ship's other noticeable distinction was the average age onboard – I've never seen so many couples, solo women and groups of friends in their 20s, 30s and early 40s. To be honest, I'd rank *Azamara Journey* remarkably close to its rival, Seabourn. It's much more casual and mainstream, with a different class of clientele, but boosted by two exceptional restaurants and a stellar crew.

Cost and inclusions

Azamara Journey operates seven-night Med cruises, from August to November 2012. Fares start at \$2,995 per person twin-share including wine at lunch and dinner, bottled water, soft drinks, tea, coffee and port shuttles. See www.azamaracruises.com.



Prime C and Wine Cellar



Azamara Journey



Dinner on deck

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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

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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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Window Cabin **\$416**
Balcony Cabin **\$516** – includes SGD \$100 F&B Credit per cabin

3 NIGHT CRUISES

Singapore, Penang, Phuket
Selected departures from 2 October 2011 – 25 March 2012

Inside Cabin **\$544**
Window Cabin **\$616**
Balcony Cabin **\$769** – includes SGD \$300 F&B Credit per cabin

5 NIGHT CRUISES

Singapore, Penang, Phuket, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang)
Selected departures from 2 October 2011 – 25 March 2012

Inside Cabin **\$890**
Window Cabin **\$1015**
Balcony Cabin **\$1265** – includes SGD \$400 F&B Credit per cabin

Cruises include all meals[^] and entertainment onboard plus port and fuel charges.

For bookings & further information, contact your preferred Travel Agent

*CONDITIONS APPLY: All prices are cruise only, AUD, per person twin share and subject to change and availability. Prices based on following cabin categories; Inside Cabin DC, Window Cabin CC, Balcony Cabin BC. Single passengers must pay a single supplement. Every effort is made to ensure advertisement accuracy, however Star Cruises cannot be held responsible for printing or typographical errors or errors arising from unforeseen circumstances. Pricing & Balcony Class Credit is correct as at 8 September 2011. Pricing valid from 15 September 2011 until 31 December 2011 & can be withdrawn at any time without notice. Price includes port charges and fuel surcharge. Holiday surcharge imposed on Peak Sailings Dates: 23 Dec 2011, 25 Dec 2011, 28 Dec 2011 & 30 Dec 2011. Promotion not for sale on the following dates: 5 & 3 night cruise – 1, 8, 15 & 22 January 2012 and 2 night cruise – 4, 11, 18 & 25 January 2012.
[^] Meals included in selected restaurants. Strict cancellation fees apply. Please note that a surcharge may be imposed on credit card transactions. A service fee will be charged. SCS 26239