

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 03 April 2012

## Azamara Quest docks safely after fire

All passengers and crew have survived a two-day sailing to Borneo after an engine-room fire left the ship adrift and without power.

It was only two weeks ago that Azamara Club Cruises' Senior Vice President Edie Bornstein visited Sydney to report the popularity of its voyages among Australians.

Eighty-nine of those Australians (and 14 New Zealanders) were onboard *Azamara Quest* on the weekend when a fire broke out while sailing in the Sulu Sea, near the Philippines.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* about the issue of safety at sea, Bornstein said that lessons had been learned from the tragic capsizing of the *Costa Concordia* in January.

"The good thing to come out of it was that it found flaws that needed to be better adhered to," she said.

Bornstein emphasised Azamara's commitment to its guests: "Our mantra is safety first."

This mantra was upheld this week, according to reports from passengers on *Azamara Quest*, which arrived at 9.23pm last night (01 April) at the port of Sandakan, in Sabah, on the north-eastern coast of Malaysian Borneo.

An Australian passenger reported that the situation was handled "very professionally", with the captain providing regular updates and the crew handing out water and assisting guests with their needs.

Power and propulsion were restored within a few hours and it was only the lack of air-conditioning that made the cruise uncomfortable, the passenger said.

One crew member was diagnosed by the ship's doctor with "prolonged heat and smoke exposure" and has been transported to the local hospital, while four others suffered smoke inhalation.

The rest of the 17-day cruise, originally scheduled from Hong Kong to Singapore, has been cancelled, but passengers have the option to stay onboard the ship while it is docked in Sandakan or to transfer to a local hotel.

They have also been offered a refund and a future credit for 100% of the fare.

The company's president and CEO, Larry Pimentel, is flying into Sandakan today to inspect the ship and thank "our amazing guests for their patience", he said.

An announcement will be made today regarding the status of the next sailing (12 April) of *Azamara Quest*.

## TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* features five pages of all the latest cruise news.



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## New shore excursions

TRAVEL specialist Viator has launched a new online portal offering cruisers the ability to find and book shore excursions, and claims to offer discounts of up to 60% off the typical rates offered by cruise lines.

Priced in US dollars, the portal [www.shoreexcursions.viator.com](http://www.shoreexcursions.viator.com), features more than 500 shore excursions across 80 ports worldwide, and narrows down options to the most relevant tours and activities for cruisers based on the specific itinerary of the vessel they are cruising on.

As such, Viator is able to instantly utilise ships' itineraries from companies including Carnival, HAL, MSC Cruises, NCL and Royal Caribbean, and present cruisers with options that specifically work for each port of call based on arrival and departure times, and availability.



## Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY	
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Thu 05 Apr
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	Sat 07 Apr
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Mon 09 Apr
<i>Volendam</i>	Tue 10 Apr
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Sat 07 Apr
<i>Pacific Sun</i>	Sun 08 Apr
MELBOURNE	
<i>Volendam</i>	Sun 08 Apr
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Sun 08 Apr
BURNIE	
<i>Volendam</i>	Sat 07 Apr
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Mon 09 Apr
DARWIN	
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Wed 04 Apr
<i>Coral Princess</i>	Thu 05 Apr
<i>Coral Princess</i>	Fri 06 Apr
AUCKLAND	
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Tue 03 Apr
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Sun 08 Apr

## Suburbs proposed for Sydney berths

A government-commissioned review has rejected Garden Island as a base for cruise ships and instead recommended Mosman and Botany Bay.

A MAJOR inquiry into Australia's cruising future has concluded that Sydney's naval base is "essentially incompatible" with the cruise industry as a long-term berthing option for ships that cannot fit under the Harbour Bridge.

However, it has suggested Navy vessels could be moved to a new wharf on the other side of Garden Island, which would allow cruise ships to dock at the existing naval wharves.

The review, by former Defence Department Secretary Allan Hawke, commissioned last year by Defence Minister Stephen Smith, noted that the Royal Australian Navy's needs and "national security" were more important than extending megaliners' access to Garden Island.

Releasing the report, known as the Hawke Review, on Friday, Smith said that national security "should not be surrendered to the seasonal commercial requirements of the cruise ship industry".

Dr Hawke offered five alternative locations, including a deepwater mooring at Athol Bay, Mosman and adjacent to the Overseas Passenger Terminal, and the cargo terminal in Botany Bay.

He said that another option was to construct a new naval wharf on the east side of Garden Island, but this would require significant government funding.

Carnival Australia was the first to express its disappointment at the review, which CEO Ann Sherry had hoped would support the shared use of Garden Island.

"The report's option of a new mooring off Mosman isn't a solution and is no better than the current situation where international travellers' first experience of Sydney is a ride to shore in a lifeboat," she said.

Sherry warned that cruise companies would ditch Australia as a destination and look to other Asia-Pacific countries.

"Singapore and other major world cities have embraced cruising and have built state-of-the-art facilities to make the most of the economic opportunity," she said.

Chairman of the International Cruise Council of Australia, Gavin Smith, told *Cruise Weekly* he was "considering the report and determining the implications" for the industry.

"The cruise industry will also continue to work with the NSW Government to determine the best possible means of managing our needs in Sydney given our continued growth," he said.

The Government will now consider the Hawke Review's recommendations alongside a Defence Force review which will be released at the end of the month as part of the 2014 Defence White Paper.

## Win a Royal cruise online

TO celebrate the launch of its new Facebook page, Royal Caribbean International is giving its fans the chance to win a cabin on *Voyager of the Seas*' inaugural cruise from Sydney in November this year.

To enter the competition simply 'Like' the page ([CLICK HERE](#)) and then post your top 3 cruising destinations on the page before 31 May 2012.



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## Australian cruisers flock to Norway

**THERE'S** a wildfire building across Australia and it has nothing to do with the Aussie bush, but rather a Norwegian cruise line called Hurtigruten, and the thousands of Australians that are beginning to discover just what the century old company has to offer.

Established in 1893 as a way to link northern and southern Norway and its really remote communities, delivering mail, cargo and passengers, Hurtigruten (which roughly translated, means 'fast route') has grown exponentially over the past century and now offers cruising along the Norwegian coast, Greenland, Spitsbergen, Europe and Antarctica.

Whilst the company is well known in Norway and Germany, the company is not a household name in Australia, however if the recent booking figures are anything to go by, that status quo is getting a severe shake-up.

Speaking to **CW** whilst on a whirlwind tour of Australia last week, Hurtigruten's MD Kathryn Beadle, said that the number of Australians booking Hurtigruten cruises has grown by 15% in the past year, and shows no sign of slowing down in the next 12 months.

Hurtigruten's burgeoning popularity in Australia is being attributed to several factors,

including a greater awareness of what the cruise line has to offer, as well as a two-year peak in Northern Lights activity.

"We've worked hard to get a higher awareness of the product out there and once somebody looks into us and realises that there is a high satisfaction level with our cruisers, and that there is something that's very different about us, word of mouth spreads," Beadle said.

"The big change that we've seen in the Australian market is the number of people that now travel in the (northern hemisphere) winter to experience the Northern Lights.

"Previously our Australian market was really concentrated in the European summer months, but over the last 12 months that's changed drastically," she added.

Beadle also said that the growth of Hurtigruten in the Aussie market may have something to do with a certain symbiosis between Australian travellers and the experiences that the cruise line offers.

"I think Australians love to travel and I think our product suits the Australian market brilliantly because our market is people who are well travelled, they are well educated, they're not travelling with us because they want an endless choice of meals (although our food is absolutely fantastic and all locally sourced), people are travelling with us because they want the authentic experience, and that's what Australians like," Beadle said.

"Glitz and glamour is not what we're about, and that's not what we want to be about, we are really about letting people enjoy Norway, for us it's all about the destination," she added.

To learn more about Hurtigruten see your travel agent, or visit [www.hurtigruten.com.au](http://www.hurtigruten.com.au).



### One week Crystal cruise sale

**CRYSTAL** Cruises is holding a one-week sales event between 02 - 05 April 2012, which offers up to US\$800 per stateroom in shore excursion credits for selected *Crystal Serenity* voyages departing in June, July and August.

See your travel agent for details.



**NORWAY** loves cruising.

A documentary described by CNN as "the most boring program in the world, but absolutely addictive", which used 11 cameras onboard a Hurtigruten ship to film a cruise minute by minute in real time, proved so popular that even Norway's queen got in on the action.

Titled Minute by Minute, the documentary has just won a bunch of awards for basically showing a Hurtigruten cruise along the Norwegian coast.

"The momentum built as it moved up the coast and it became a bit of a one-upmanship in the different ports where people were turning out including locals, schools, mayors and bands," said Hurtigruten MD Kathryn Beadle.

"Even the Prime Minister Tweeted about it, and the Queen of Norway in her own yacht, actually met the vessel as it arrived in Kirkenes," she added.

### Rhapsody is revitalised

**THE** US\$45 million revitalisation project onboard *Rhapsody of the Seas* has been completed, with the vessel now en-route from Singapore to Australia.

After arriving in Australia *Rhapsody* will depart on 13 April for a 17-night Trans Pacific Cruise to Hawaii before kicking off her Alaskan season on 11 May.

### Europa 2 geared to English

**ALL** cruises onboard Hapag-Lloyd's newest vessel, *Europa 2* (launching in May 2013), will be geared towards English-speaking guests, with the offering of fully bilingual itineraries.

According to newly released details from the German cruise line, *Europa 2* will feature 26 itineraries across 123 ports, including seven-day combinable Mediterranean cruises during the northern hemisphere summer months, and 13-20 days cruises to the Arabian Peninsula and South East Asia in the winter months.

Currently under construction at STX Europe, *Europa 2* will feature 11 decks, eight restaurants, six bars, a 1,000-square metre spa and fitness centre and a cooking school, whilst all her cabins will have outdoor verandas.



### Did You Know?

#### Classic International Cruises' *Athena*

- ◆ *Athena* is Australia's only traditionally-styled liner. She once served as a Swedish trans-Atlantic liner.
- ◆ Athens is named after the Greek goddess of wisdom.
- ◆ *Athena* is the only cruise ship to be based in Perth and Adelaide every summer.
- ◆ Every one of *Athena's* 2,776 cabins offers a bath tub.
- ◆ *Athena* is one of the few cruise liners operating in Australia that maintains the tradition of passengers throwing streamers at the start of a voyage. They are handed out free to passengers at sailaway parties from Adelaide and Fremantle.
- ◆ *Athena* will be the first-ever cruise ship to visit the Victorian town of Portland and only the second to visit the South Australian town of Robe during Classic International Cruises' 2012/13 summer season in Australia.

## Last Minute Deals

This weekly column highlights hot deals on cruises departing soon – ideal for our spontaneous readers.

Check out this week's cruise bargain:

### 8-day Paris and the Heart of Normandy

- **From:** \$2,749pp
- **Departs:** 18 and 22 April 2012
- **Visits:** Monet's Garden, Notre Dame Cathedral, Omaha Beach and Richard the Lionheart's Castle in Les Andelys & Versailles.
- **Includes:** six guided tours, port charges
- **Contact:** [www.vikingrivercruises.com.au](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au)

## Cyclone warnings for South Sea

**SOUTH** Sea Cruises is monitoring weather and sea conditions following a tropical cyclone warning issued for all of Fiji.

The cruise line cancelled all its day cruises yesterday, and said any further schedule changes will be weather dependent.

## 2nd guest goes free

**VARIETY** Cruises is offering a second guest cruises free deal on selected eight-day Greek Is, Turkey and the Adriatic cruises paid in full by 13 April 2012, call 1800 623 267 for details.

## Triumph quelled at Galveston

**CARNIVAL** *Triumph* was detained in Galveston on Saturday by US law enforcement authorities in relation to a lawsuit lodged by the family of a German tourist, Siglinde Stumph, who perished when the *Costa Concordia* sunk in January.

Costa Cruises is part of the Carnival Corporation, and is currently facing a multitude of lawsuits in the wake of the *Concordia* disaster.

*Triumph*, which was cruising a five-day Mexico itinerary, arrived in Galveston at 7am on Saturday and was ordered upon arrival, by a US judge, to be held as security in the Stumph case.

It is not known what legal maneuvering occurred between 7am, when the ship was detained and 4.30pm when it departed (30 minutes later than scheduled), but it is understood that a "confidential resolution" was reached.

Carnival said that in port "guests were allowed to board the ship as normal".

## Seabourn in Australia

**SEABOURN** *Quest* will make her first ever visit to Australia next year, calling at Sydney, Brisbane, Hamilton Island, Townsville, Cairns and Thursday Island in February.

The latest addition to the Seabourn fleet, *Quest's* Australian visit is part of a 116-day world cruise.

Australians will also be able to join the award-winning *Seabourn Odyssey* in local waters next year, as she explores the islands and coastlines of Indonesia, New Zealand and Australia for three months, with the regional visit including a 16-night voyage from Benoa in Bali to Sydney which departs on 21 Dec 2012 and visits Komodo Island, Darwin, Thursday Island, Cairns, Townsville, Hamilton Island and Brisbane.

## Free MSC Calypso upgrades

**GUESTS** who book an inside cabin onboard select seven-night Caribbean cruises sailing between December 2012 and April 2013 onboard *MSC Poesia*, will receive a free upgrade to a balcony cabin.

The deal is available for bookings made before 30 June, see your travel agent for details.



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# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 03 April 2012



## Onboard: Hapag-Lloyd Ms Hanseatic

by: Roderick Eime

### Expedition Südsee, (South Seas) Tahiti to Fiji, 14 days.

It's rated the world's only 5-star expedition cruise ship according to the authoritative Berlitz Guide and it's easy to see why. Even though this Finnish-built, 1A Super ice-rated vessel is approaching her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, she is still in better condition than some ships half her age. Continuously modernised with fancy comforts like the new in-cabin entertainment and e-mail system, she still maintains an 'as new' feel. Her most recent upgrade took place in June 2011.

First impressions? Well, sailing aboard any Hapag-Lloyd (HL) vessel is a distinction, but it is also a new cultural experience for many first-timers like me. Shipboard manners are somewhat more formal than you might be used to on other smaller vessels, expedition or not. I'm used to adventure ships with a distinctly casual atmosphere, but while there are plenty of smiles and pleasant greetings, this is a ship for the well-to-do and you are often treated in a semi-regal fashion by the spotlessly uniformed and impeccably mannered staff. No-one has clicked their heels yet, but you get my drift.

Cuisine and food presentation is masterful and truly fine dining. Five or six courses in the single-seating Marco Polo Restaurant is *de rigueur* or you can make a reservation in the more convivial Bistro Lemaire, where 'ethnic' dishes are rotated to reflect the international flavour of the itineraries. The cabin minibar, with soft drinks, beer, water and juice is included, but curiously water (£1.50) and wine (£3.50) is charged in the restaurants. Coffee, tea and gourmet snacks are available all day, and the coffee is good.

Shipboard facilities are what you would expect from a much larger ship with gym, boutique, salon, pool, cabin service, etc. It really is a practical combination of the luxury elements of the line's premier vessel, *Europa*, and the capabilities of a smaller, expedition ship. As expected, there is a dedicated lecture hall. Most frontline staff are German with fluency in English, whereas, as is common, deck hands and crew are Filipino.

Cabins exist across eight categories on four of the six decks and all are outside, but none have private balconies. Two cabins are disabled-friendly, while the eight cabins and four suites on top deck enjoy butler service.

Shore excursions are conducted with a combination of tie-ups at wharves and tendering by either zodiac or enclosed lifeboats as appropriate for the destination facilities. Organised tours are typically 50-70 EURO or you can do your own thing, but prior research is advised if you are the independent type.

Reservations? As with all expedition vessels, this type of cruising will not suit everyone. The main language aboard is German and while all staff are fluent in English, not all are familiar with the subtleties of the language, let alone Australian humour. Some voyages (like this one) are advertised as bi-lingual, so announcements, some lectures and documentation are available in English also. All ICCA agents trained to sell HL cruises will point these factors out to prospective clients. Having said all that, my dear octogenarian mother, who wouldn't know Franz Beckenbauer from a Dachshund is a diehard HL fan.

More information: [www.hl-cruises.com](http://www.hl-cruises.com).



Ms Hanseatic in the south seas



Ms Hanseatic



Ms Hanseatic guests on a zodiac excursion

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