

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 14 August 2012

## Pandaw to relocate ship to Myanmar

The renamed *Sagaing Pandaw* will sail on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers from July 2013.

WHILE other cruise lines have started launching itineraries along the Mekong River, Pandaw Cruises has decided to move its newest vessel away from it.

The *Saigon Pandaw* will instead be shifted to Myanmar "to meet an increasing demand for quality river expeditions", the company announced overnight.

Launched in Vietnam last January, the ship is set to be renamed *Sagaing Pandaw* when it transfers to its new role of exploring the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers.

Pandaw's representative in Australia, John Boyd, told *Cruise Weekly* that customers were increasingly interested in this growing destination.

"With the demand for cabins on the cruises in Myanmar, since the country has opened up, it is better to operate there," he said.

But the company, which began its operations in Myanmar/Burma, will keep its other vessels in Vietnam and Cambodia.

"Pandaw will have five ships on the Mekong and four operating in Myanmar from July 2013," Boyd said.

Built in 2012, the 30-cabin *Sagaing Pandaw* has a traditional colonial style, hand-finished in brass and teak, but is equipped with luxury features and air-conditioning.

It will be available only to individual

travellers.

"Led groups will not be carried," the company said.

Classic 14-night 'Irrawaddy' cruises operate from Prome (Pyay) to Mandalay, and the 10-night 'Golden Land' cruises sail downstream from Mandalay to Prome.

Once-a-year cruises are also offered from Rangoon to Mandalay and on the Chindwin River.

Earlybird discounts of 10% are available for bookings made prior to one year before departure.

Fares include shore excursions, all onboard meals and drinks.

For details, see [www.pandaw.com](http://www.pandaw.com).

## Food and Wine in Australia

CRYSTAL Cruises has lined up a bevy of food and wine experts to accompany *Crystal Symphony's* Australia/NZ and Australia/Bali itineraries in 2013.

The line-up includes: Damien Pignolet, Sydney's renowned Modern Australian/French fusion chef and executive chef at Bistro Moncur restaurant; Heinz von Holzen, Balinese cookbook author and owner of the island's only traditional, multi-award-winning restaurant and cooking school, Bumbu Bali.

Also on the roster is Greg Doyle, former Australian Restaurateur of the Year and Owner of Pier, one of Australia's finest seafood restaurants; and Cameron Douglas, New Zealand's first and only Master Sommelier.

The experts will teach a range of complimentary cooking lessons, offer hands-on recipe instruction, wine tasting, and cocktail-mixing classes.

### TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of *CW* features four pages of the latest cruise news, plus see p5 for details on Oceania Cruises' bonus credit offer.

## Family friendly MSC

MSC Cruises has launched a new Happy Diners program which allows children to eat with their parents, but when they are finished and bored with waiting for the adults to be done, gives them an 'out' whereby specialised kids staff will collect them from the table and then are free to have fun with friends their own age.

MSC has also launched a Fun Time Dinner program where children can dine in a separate specially decorated area of the buffet restaurant with the entertainment team.

After dinner, the children will be entertained in the Mini and Junior Club while parents enjoy a leisurely dinner alone, picking up the kids when they've finished.

The Fun Time Dinner program will also feature three theme nights during voyages, including a Welcome Party, Italian Party, and Farewell and Birthday Party.

Both the Happy Diners program and the Fun Time Dinner program are available free of charge.

Meanwhile, the cruise line has also introduced a second nanny-hour to its kids' club programs, 5-6pm, where staff organise dedicated games and activities for babies and toddlers aged 10 to 36 months and their parents including playing with bricks, musical games, baby disco, puzzle games and drawing.

For more details see your travel agent.

## Want to share a laugh?

P&O Cruises is inviting its Facebook fans to create their own version of its laughter-inducing Next Year's Memories television commercials.

To craft a commercial, cruisers need to head to P&O Cruises' Facebook page and upload a holiday snap using the Laugh App on the page.

From here the image is then inserted into the advertisement and becomes the focus of mirth – similar to the current ads.

See [www.facebook.com/POCruises](http://www.facebook.com/POCruises).

## Oceania gives you credit

OCEANIA Cruises is offering guests a bonus US\$500 shipboard credit per stateroom for bookings onboard its 10-day Athens to Rome voyage.

Departing 14 October 2012 onboard *Riviera*, the voyage includes calls in Turkey, Greece, Italy, France and Monaco, see p5 for details.



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## Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY <i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Tue 14 Aug
BRISBANE <i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Sat 18 Aug
DARWIN <i>Oceanic Discoverer</i>	Thu 16 Aug
<i>Oceanic Discoverer</i>	Fri 17 Aug

## Fly for free with Azamara

THE first 200 cruisers to book on selected Asian voyages onboard *Azamara Journey* will receive free return flights.

The deal includes free return economy class flights from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide or Perth to Asia, and is applicable on bookings in Oceanview (or above) cabins.

The eligible 2013 sailings include: 13-night Indonesia Cruise departing on 13 Jan; 17-night Southeast Asia in Depth cruise departing Hong Kong on 3 Feb; 14-night Discover Thailand and Vietnam cruise departing Singapore on 20 Feb; 14-night Victoria Harbour to Beijing cruise departing Hong Kong on 6 Mar; 14-night Beijing to Victoria Harbour cruise departing Tianjin on 20 Mar; and 14-night Discover Vietnam and Thailand cruise departing Hong Kong on 3 Apr.

## Spend NYE 2012 at sea

WILTRANS is urging holidaymakers who are considering booking onboard *Crystal Symphony's* 16-day festive season voyage from Auckland to Melbourne to get in quick as spaces are filling quickly.

The voyage will depart on 20 December and will include calls at Tauranga, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin, cruise Millford, Dusky and Doubtful Sounds, and then spend two nights in Sydney before arriving for an overnight stay in Melbourne.

As part of the voyage, guests will be treated to lavish holiday dinners, parties and entertainment for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as well as a black tie gala NYE celebration on Sydney Harbour.

See your travel agent for details.

# Cruise industry needs a 10-year plan

An independent report has recommended three ways to improve Sydney's cruise industry and its contribution to the economy.

RESEARCH conducted for the NSW State Government has identified cruising's three priority issues.

According to the report by the Visitor Economy Taskforce, the most urgent needs are to expand cruise berthing capacity within Sydney ports, including at Garden Island, and to address economic loss from provedoring constraints at the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

It also recommended a 10-year Cruise Development Plan for Sydney, in consultation with industry, to assist in addressing issues relating to forecast growth, financial models for capacity building and the level of Government support for the cruise sector.

The taskforce noted that the growing popularity of cruising meant NSW requires more effective planning and infrastructure management for Sydney to remain a high-profile cruise destination and for the State to

reap the economic benefits.

Carnival Australia CEO Ann Sherry welcomed the findings.

"It's no secret that cruising is the good news story of the local tourism industry and we're pleased to see the Visitor Economy Taskforce give it such prominence and strong consideration in the report's recommendations," Sherry said.

"We're particularly encouraged by the report's recommendation that the State Government work closely with Canberra to secure access to Garden Island on a regular, scheduled basis.

"The cruise sector is already forecast to bring a total economic contribution of more than \$1.1 billion to NSW by 2020, and delivery of the priorities identified by the Visitor Economy Taskforce would mean the contribution could grow even more," she added.

## Misbehaving Mississippi

RECORD low water levels in the Mississippi has forced the America Queen Steamboat Company to rejig some of the American Queen's August itineraries so she avoids destinations south of Helena, Arkansas.

Instead guests are being offered coach tours and accommodation to compensate for missed stops, as well as amended itineraries.

"You can't control the river and can't fight the river, but what you can do is control the guest experience," said Senior VP Tim Rubacky.

"We are focused on keeping guests happy," he added.

## From one Star to another



FORMER Army Signal Corps sergeant Gregory Melikian treated guests onboard *Star Princess* to a special presentation about his experiences during WWII.

As part of his service, in 1945 at 20 years of age, Melikian was tasked with sending the telegraph message from US General Dwight Eisenhower announcing the end of the war in Europe.

The message was sent shortly after the surrender of German forces from the makeshift Allied headquarters located in a French schoolhouse.

Melikian gave his presentation in the *Star Princess's* Princess Theatre during a holiday he was taking onboard with a large group of family and friends.

He was also invited to meet Captain Edward Perrin on the ship's bridge (pictured above).

## 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:

- Eight-night Vancouver to San Diego cruise onboard *Celebrity Millennium***
- **From:** \$2,999pp (Oceanview cabin)
  - **Departs:** 14 September 2012
  - **Visits:** Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria in British Columbia; San Francisco and Monterey in California
  - **Includes:** Return flights, eight-night cruise, two-nights accom in San Diego and one-night accom in Vancouver.
  - **Contact:** [www.ecruising.travel](http://www.ecruising.travel)

## New name, new itineraries

NEXT year Quark Expeditions is shaking up its Antarctic offering, renaming *Clipper Adventurer Sea Adventurer*, and launching 3 new itineraries.

The details come in advance of the release of the company's 2013/14 brochure in September, and include details about the new 22-day Explorers and Kings voyage.

The cruise will depart from Buenos Aires on 02 November 2013 onboard *Sea Spirit* and will feature the first-ever Floating Polar Film Festival- which will include a diverse documentary film program set against the remote beauty of Antarctic waters.

Other new itineraries include an 11-day Crossing the Circle voyage which departs on 22 February 2012 and will see guests celebrate NYE onboard the *Sea Adventurer*.

Described as a 'do it all adventure' the third new itinerary, the 23-day Epic Antarctica, will depart on 03 February 2014 and is the only voyage available taking passengers to the Falklands and South Georgia as well as across the Antarctic Circle to the Peninsula.

## Lotus offers ultimate escape



PRINCESS Cruises has given cruise fans a sneak peek at its new Lotus Spa set to debut in June next year onboard *Royal Princess* when she launches.

The Lotus Spa will offer more treatment rooms than any spa onboard Princess' fleet, and promises to rejuvenate and relax guests with its contemporary, sophisticated decor, exotic steam rooms, sensory showers and private Couples Villas.

Spa lovers can also look forward to Lotus' The Enclave, a huge thermal suite which offers treatments such as the Hammam (a Turkish-style steam room), the Caldarium (a herbal steam room), the Laconium (a dry heat sauna), sensory showers and the line's first-ever hydrotherapy pool.

The Lotus Spa features are detailed in the company's latest video previewing *Royal Princess*, viewable at [www.princess.com/royalprincessactivities](http://www.princess.com/royalprincessactivities).

## Sleeping better with Silversea

SILVERSEA is boosting guest comfort with a new range of Pratesi custom-made bed linens.

The new bedding collection features 100% Egyptian cotton satin sheets, pillowcases and duvet covers and will debut on *Silver Spirit* in September, *Silver Cloud* in November, and fleet-wide in 2013.



## Solo fares cut for Russia

SOLO travellers looking to cruise Russia will be excited by the Russian Travel Centre's decision to slash the single supplement on a selection of voyages booked before 29 October 2012.

As such singles will pay the same price as twin share passengers on a number of Russian voyages, including the eight-day Moscow to St Petersburg cruise which is now priced for solo travellers from \$1,380 (representing a saving of \$675).

For more details, see your local travel agent, or phone the Russian Travel Centre on 1300 668 844.



## CRUISING in the outback.

The Director of Carnival Cruise Lines in Australia, Jennifer Vandekreeke, showed off her own Aussie spirit prior to the arrival of *Carnival Spirit* in Australian waters in October, by tackling the Australian Outback Marathon.

Vandekreeke and her family, Robin and twins Phoebe and Chase, arrived in the Red Centre last month with the aim of seeing some of the country's most spectacular landscapes, learning about Aboriginal culture and running the marathon to raise funds for the Cathy Freeman Foundation.

Held on 28 July between Yulara and Uluru, the race saw 309 runners take place, taking on a combination of marathon, half-marathon, 11k and 6k races.

"My husband Robin decided at the last minute to do the 11k because it was just too beautiful not to race," Jennifer said.

"I have to say that the energy of Uluru carried me through the entire race with a smile on my face.

"The countryside is so striking that the race flew by in no time. Visiting Uluru has made me fall even more in love with this raw, wild and fascinating country," she added.

As a result of their efforts, the Vandekreeke family raised \$2,150 dollars for the Cathy Freeman Foundation, with funds going towards improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal children on Palm Island.

Anyone who would like to add to the tally and support the Foundation should **CLICK HERE**.



Jennifer mid Marathon

## Northern lights looking good


REPORTS from the Northern Space Research Centre predict even more Northern Light activity between September 2012 and April 2013 than there was last year, which is good news for cruisers planning a voyage in the polar regions.

"Thanks to strong solar activity, the coming Norwegian winter once again promises a particularly impressive Northern Lights season," a statement from Hurtigruten said.

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WEEKLY

Tuesday 14 August 2012

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WEEKLY

Follow us on:

Just one click away from  
keeping up to date with all the  
breaking news as it comes to  
hand...



## First impressions of a river cruise

by: Louise and Helen Goldsbury

Today I'm passing the microphone to my mother, who experienced her first-ever cruise last week. She joined me on Uniworld's *River Royale* along the Saone and Rhone in southern France.

Her response when asked, on day three, what she thought?  
"Heavenly."

"I didn't expect to be on land so much, to get off every day and walk around," she said.

"And I didn't expect the staff to be so nice. I thought they would be 'fake nice' but they are genuine and have a great sense of humour."

At the end of the one-week trip, Mum gave me her final assessment.

### The cabin

"A bit small but it had everything that was needed and was fine for the length of time. You can sit in the lounge or on the sun deck or use the computers. I was amazed by our French balcony. I thought we'd be lucky to have a porthole."

### The food

"Brilliant. Lots of variety, vegetarian and low-fat options. The desserts were ruinous. As much as you weren't going to have one, you couldn't pass it by."

### The service

"First class. They really couldn't do enough. Every day they were fresh and enthusiastic. I couldn't pick a favourite: maybe Georgiev or Bogdan or Lina or Nadia. All of them!"

### The passengers

"An interesting mix; mostly good-natured and friendly. I liked sitting with different people at meals, but if you didn't feel like it, you could find a table to yourself. At first I thought I was going to avoid all the Aussies, but I ended up having a lot of fun with them."

### The destination

"All ports were very interesting culturally, with good shopping. The local guides were great. I liked that there was a choice of tours for different interests and levels of fitness. I could've done with an extra day in each place."

### Ease of travel

"By far the best way because you're always getting off at a different location, and you can walk into town, go on a tour or stay on the boat. I also loved being able to take a bike for a ride along the river."

### Value onboard

"I was happy with the free wine with meals, and other drinks are reasonably priced: 4 euro for the cocktail of the day and 16 euro for a bottle of sparkling wine."

### Unexpected surprise?

"I enjoyed the morning exercise with the charming fitness instructor. She was very low-key, which would benefit people on a river cruise."

### What was missing?

"A swimming pool, even though I was secretly glad to not have to take my clothes off. There was a Jacuzzi at the back but nobody seemed to know about it."

### What would you say to people contemplating a river cruise?

"Try it before you try an ocean cruise. An ocean cruise might put people off cruising but a river cruise wouldn't."

*A seven-night cruise in Burgundy and Provence is priced from \$3,155pp. Pay in full before 31 October 2012 to receive a discount of up to \$1,000 per couple.*

*For full details see [www.uniworldcruises.com.au](http://www.uniworldcruises.com.au).*



River Royale on the Rhone



Welcome to wine country



Mum and I enjoy the top deck

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# Enchanted Grandeur

UPPER-PREMIUM CRUISING

**ATHENS TO ROME**  
**14 OCTOBER 2012**  
**10 DAYS - ON BOARD RIVIERA**



#### OCT 14 - ATHENS (PIRAEUS), GREECE

Climb up the magnificent Acropolis and stand in awe of the Parthenon, the beautiful temples and the view over Athens stretched out before you.

#### OCT 15 - EPHEBUS (KUSADASI), TURKEY

Meander through the ruins of ancient Ephesus and marvel at the famed Library of Celsus, the huge amphitheatre, the marble roads with their chariot marks, the amazing mosaic sidewalks and the superb, rarely opened Terrace Houses.

#### OCT 16 - MONEMVASIA, GREECE

In Monemvasia, known as the "Gibraltar of the East," discover an ancient castle and Byzantine churches, a monastery dating back to 1150 in the uninhabited Upper Town, and the Muslim mosque, which houses the city's archaeological collection.

#### OCT 17 - ARGOSTOLI (CEPHALONIA), GREECE

This capital of the island of Cephalonia resides in a sheltered bay along Koutavos Lagoon, where you might catch a glimpse of a loggerhead turtle.

#### OCT 18 - TAORMINA (SICILY), ITALY

Enjoy magnificent panoramic views on the way up to the town, where you can stroll down medieval lanes past stunning palaces. See the famed Greek theatre and its fantastic view of Mount Etna.

#### OCT 19 - SORRENTO/CAPRI, ITALY

Beautiful Capri, with its stunning panoramas, villages, charming piazzas and the Villa San Michele, makes a nice diversion. Visit the ruins at Pompeii, take a cooking lesson in Sorrento or travel to the frenetic city of Naples and learn to make pizzas as the Neapolitans do.

#### OCT 20/21 - FLORENCE/PISA/TUSCANY (LIVORNO), ITALY

Spend a glorious day amidst the fabled architecture of this Renaissance city. See the Duomo with Brunelleschi's dome, the famous baptistry, Michelangelo's magnificent *David*, the bridge over the Arno and the astonishing Uffizi Gallery.

#### OCT 22 - PROVENCE (MARSEILLE), FRANCE

See the sights and enjoy the views of historic old Marseille and visit the charming fishing port of Cassis. Or venture into the celebrated Provençal countryside with its fields of lavender and sunflowers.

#### OCT 23 - MONTE CARLO, MONACO

Drive along the famous Grand Corniche with its stunning views of Monaco and the Old City; then stroll through this marvelous quarter and its pink Grimaldi Palace. And don't forget the Casino. Explore the wonderful old villages along the Côte d'Azur from Nice to medieval Eze or Cannes, Grasse and lovely St. Paul-de-Vence - each one a jewel to be savoured.

#### OCT 24 - ROME (CIVITAVECCHIA), ITALY

Travel to Rome and revel in the magnificent monuments, from the ancient Roman Forum and Colosseum to the splendour of St. Peter's Basilica with Michelangelo's *Pietà* and his breathtaking frescos in the Sistine Chapel. Or enjoy a drive through the lush farmlands of the Roman countryside to lovely medieval Castelgandolfo.

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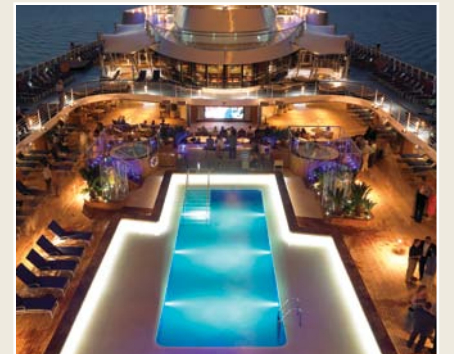
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Contact your Travel Agent or Oceania Cruises at 02 9959 1371  
Visit [www.OceaniaCruises.com](http://www.OceaniaCruises.com)

\*Terms and Conditions: Offers are valid till 30 September 2012 or sold out. All fares listed are in AUS, per guest, twin share based on select stateroom categories & included non commissionable port taxes, government fees & gratuities (correct as of 10 Aug 2012). Fares displayed reflect all promotional savings. Valid for new bookings only. Subject to availability. Not combinable with other offers, are capacity controlled & may be withdrawn at anytime without notice. Cruise ship fuel surcharge may apply. The cruise ship fuel surcharge if applicable is additional revenue to Oceania Cruises. Cancellation penalties and conditions apply. Shipboard Credit is per stateroom in US\$ and non refundable or transferable. Savings amounts vary dependent on stateroom category booked. Additional Terms and Conditions may apply. Complete Terms and Conditions may be found in the Guest Ticket Contract.

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