

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 24 July 2012

Viking to add two new ships in 2013

Viking River Cruises will now be launching a record-breaking eight longships next year and offering all-inclusive fares.

Viking Jarl and *Viking Atla* are the latest vessels set to be added to the fleet in Europe, bringing the company's total to 14 new ships in two years.

The two new 95-cabin ships will host passengers on eight-day 'Rhine Getaway' cruise sailing from Amsterdam to Basel.

Each of the ships will have two Explorer Suites, the largest on Europe's rivers, featuring a separate living room, bedroom and private wraparound veranda.

Jarl and *Atla* will also have seven two-room veranda suites with a veranda in the living

room and a French balcony in the bedroom, 39 veranda staterooms with full-size verandas, 32 French balcony staterooms, and an all-weather indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace with retractable floor-to-ceiling glass doors allowing guests to enjoy the scenery while dining outside.

Teresia Fors, managing director Australia & New Zealand, Viking River Cruises, told *Cruise Weekly* it was "another proud moment" for the company.

"The Viking longships have been developed combining guest preferences and current travel trends and Viking's innovative and patent-pending design with cutting-edge technology," she said.

"We expect these new, innovative ships to be very well received by Australian and New Zealand travellers and we are already receiving very positive feedback from those who have already travelled with us in 2012."

Fors also announced the launch of "just about fully inclusive" cruises, with fares including all drinks, meals, daily shore excursions, tipping and port taxes.

"Again, meeting the needs of the Australian and New Zealand travellers, we also found it very important to offer an air offer that gives the traveller flexibility and simplicity," she said.

"The air offer is valid with any stateroom category, any cruise date and combinable with travel to any major destination in Europe on any date the traveller chooses."

Fors said the company was so confident that it offered Australians the best deal on river cruises in 2013 that it has launched a new site: www.vikingrivercruises.com.au/compare.

For details, see your travel agent or call 1800 829 138 (Australia) or 0800 447 913 (NZ).

Concierge gets classier

CELEBRITY Cruises has boosted its premium ConciergeClass offering and is now providing its Concierge guests with an exclusive pre-departure lounge which offers free coffee and juices, as well as hand-delivered courtesy cards to ensure guests can easily contact the Concierge at any time during the cruise.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of **CW** features four pages of all the latest cruise news, plus see **p5** for details on Swan Hellenic's travels in India & Arabia.

Crew Profile



This week *Cruise Weekly* speaks with **Thomas Karlsson**, Hotel Director onboard **P&O Cruises Australia's Pacific Dawn**.

How long have you been working on cruise ships?
13 years.

When did you join P&O Cruises?
March 2008.

What is the best thing about working for P&O? P&O Cruises Australia has the friendliest crew and passengers on the seven seas. You are not just a number like in many of the bigger cruise lines today. Your opinion is well heard and valued which makes us one big happy family.

What is your favourite cruising destination? Sailing into New York is wonderful, and Sydney's not too far behind.

Briefly explain what your job entails and what passengers can expect from your services.

My job is to look after all passenger services with a team of 600 crew members. It is our priority every day to ensure that everyone is met with a smile and gets the best service from the moment they leave their cabin until they retire at the end of a relaxed or fun filled day.

What do you enjoy most about your job? No day is ever the same. I've managed to see the whole world and made many close friends along the way.

Who is the most famous person you have served? There are so many... my biggest celebrity experience would have to have been at a charity event in New York onboard *QM2*. The whole dining room was jam-packed with famous people including Antonio Banderas, Whoopie Goldberg, Beyonce, Danny De Vito and Liz Hurley. Funniest one there was John Cleese!

What is the most interesting request you've received from a passenger?

A guest asked if I could marry his daughter. I considered it as she was stunning but I am still unmarried today.

Do you have any embarrassing cruise stories you can share with us?

My face certainly went red once when an angry guest caused a big scene in the middle of the dining room, saying that his wine tasted like **** and asked me to taste it. As I took the glass everyone in the dining room stood up and started singing happy birthday – they really got me!



Savings of up to \$2,660 per couple on 2013 Viking River Cruises.

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Cruise Calendar


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

<p>SYDNEY</p> <p><i>Pacific Jewel</i> <i>Dawn Princess</i></p>	<p>Tue 24 July Fri 27 July</p>
<p>BRISBANE</p> <p><i>Pacific Dawn</i> <i>Dawn Princess</i></p>	<p>Tue 24 July Wed 25 July</p>
<p>DARWIN</p> <p><i>Oceanic Discoverer</i> <i>Oceanic Discoverer</i></p>	<p>Thu 26 July Fri 27 July</p>

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Industry awards for RCCL, Princess, APT

The National Travel Industry Awards on Sat night honoured three top cruise companies.

ROYAL Caribbean Cruise Lines, Princess Cruises and APT were all significant winners at last weekend's travel industry "night of nights".

The ceremony was the culmination of a long period of nominations and then voting by travel agents, followed by evaluation from a judging panel of industry experts.

Perennial winner Princess Cruises won the "Best Cruise Operator - Australian Based Operation," for the fourth year running, with Director of Commercial Operations Stan Birge saying how exciting it was to win again.

Royal Caribbean took out the "Best Cruise Operator - International Based Operation" for the first time ever, with md Gavin Smith saying his team in North Sydney had "dedicated themselves to being the most relevant cruise company in this country today" and it was great to get the industry's recognition.

And APT also took out an award - but for its

domestic tour operations rather than its extensive river cruise portfolio.

APT ceo Chris Hall said the company had expanded its business in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia.

"We are doing some exciting new things on the international stage, but Australia will always be the heart and soul of APT," he said.

APT recently launched its new China cruise brochure, offering 'companion fly free' deals on 9-15 day tours, and it also purchased a key stake in UK-based Noble Caledonia.

MS Caledonian Sky currently has a 'companion fly free deal' on Alaskan cruises - for details, see www.APTouring.com.au.

Get fit with a Royal Princess

ROYAL Princess will feature a multi-activity Princess Sports Central facility when she debuts next June, according to new details released by Princess Cruises.

The facility, on Decks 18 and 19, will offer guests the opportunity to play basketball, tennis, volleyball and badminton, as well as practice their swing in a portable batting cage.

Sports Central will also feature a driving range and a simulated laser shooting range.

Meanwhile, guests will also be able to work up an appetite on *Royal Princess's* double lane jogging track on Deck 18, as well as in the vessel's Fitness Centre on Deck 17 which pairs a state-of-the-art gym with ocean views.

Voyager breaks Korean record

ROYAL Caribbean's Voyager of the Seas has become the largest cruise ship to visit Busan in South Korea, with its port debut on 19 July.

Due to arrive in Sydney this November, *Voyager* stopped in Busan (South Korea's second largest city), as part of her first ever Far East season.


Saga signals possible newbuild

THE cruise rumour mill went into overdrive at the end of last month, after the Commercial Director of Saga Shipping, James Duguid, told media at a cruise industry event in Brussels, that Saga Cruises is considering ordering a newbuild.

Soon after the bombshell, the company announced that it will retire its 39-year old *Saga Ruby* (CW 17 July) at the end of the year, with her final 31-night voyage set to depart 07 December.

The company has however since shied away from confirming a newbuild, with a spokesperson clarifying Saga's position, saying that "We are always on a search to develop and invest in the fleet".

"There are no firm plans to expand the fleet, but that is not to say we won't," the spokesperson added.



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:

10-night Mediterranean cruise onboard *Costa Mediterranea*

- **From:** \$2,229pp (for sale until 27 July)
- **Departs:** 19 August 2012
- **Visits:** Malaga (Spain), Casablanca (Morocco), Cadiz (Spain), Lisbon (Portugal), Valencia (Spain), Barcelona (Spain) and Savona (Italy).
- **Includes:** 10-night cruise accommodation, all onboard meals, onboard gratuities, port charges and taxes and mandatory ship insurance.
- **Contact:** www.ecruising.travel

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Get a glimpse of what the new *Titanic II* will look like

THE world has been given a glimpse of what the *Titanic II* will look like, with the release of preliminary plans and drawings for the project, by ship design and engineering company, Deltamarin.



According to billionaire Clive Palmer, whose cruise company, Blue Star Line, will debut *Titanic II*, the release of the Preliminary General Arrangement Plan and Preliminary Midship Section Drawing marks a milestone in the creation of *Titanic II*.

"These plans underline the commitment and progression Blue Star Line has for the *Titanic II* project," he said.

The drawings show that *Titanic II* will feature nine decks, complete with first, second and third class, officer and crew accommodation, as well as a new Safety Deck between D and C decks which will feature lifeboats, safety chutes (or slides) and common public rooms.

According to Palmer, *Titanic II's* design will keep the public rooms, passenger stairs, cabins and other features in similar locations as in the original ship, whilst the original separation between first, second and third class will also be kept in the ship's final design.

The vessel will also sport new escape stairs, service elevators and airconditioning.

Titanic II's debut, which will retrace *Titanic's* original journey is scheduled to depart in 2016.

Hot Seabourn fares for cold days

A SWAG of Seabourn cruises are now on sale, including a 10-night *Seabourn Odyssey* cruise through the Indonesian archipelago which departs on 11 December, and is now priced from US\$3,699pp.

The sale is running from now until 30 July, and includes deals on almost 50 cruises, including local sailings such as a 16-night *Seabourn Odyssey* cruise from Bali to Sydney departing 21 December, which is priced from US\$7,399pp.

See your travel agent for details, or visit www.seabourn.com.

Dreaming of warm sailing?

A BRAND new three-day adventure cruise, has sailed into Keppel Bay (located off the Capricorn Coast, Queensland, around 640km North of Brisbane), courtesy of the cruise company Sail Capricornia.

Perfect for those looking to avoid the chill, the bite sized Sail the Keppels voyage is filled with sailing, snorkeling and swimming, and takes place onboard the luxury sailboat *Grace*.

Debuting this week, the cruise will spend two nights at the Great Keppel Island Holiday Village with all food and equipment supplied.

"The Keppel Islands are one of our regions greatest assets and this new 3 day cruise will certainly showcase the best they have to offer," said the CEO of Capricorn Enterprise, Mary Carroll.

For more info see your travel agent.

Grace at work



WONDERING what to pack?

Packing for a cruise holiday can be a daunting task: what will the weather bring? What style of clothes will be appropriate? Formal or casual? Slacks or shorts?

Fortunately news outlets in China have reported a new fashion trend, sackcloth, giving cruisers an insight into cutting edge attire and ensuring that they keep in-step with local fashions.

Designed as a definitive statement on returning to "the simple life" the sackcloth range is certainly setting tongues wagging, with the designer's street debut of the line garnering mixed reactions from the public.

"I just thought that she couldn't afford a proper dress," said one confused passer-by of his reaction to a model sporting a high-end sackcloth dress (pictured right).



Grand Circle in Myanmar

SMALL ship cruise company, Grand Circle Cruise Line, has announced it will offer a cruise tour in Burma for 2013 titled 'Burma & the Irrawaddy River: Bagan to Mandalay'.

The cruise tour will include a 4-night stay in Bangkok, a 3-night stay in Rangoon, a flight to Bagan and a 7-night cruise onboard the 34-guest *RV Paukan* calling at remote villages, untouristed trading centres, and important Buddhist sites en route to Mandalay.

Departures are scheduled between Mar-May and Sep-Dec 2013, with prices starting at US\$3,795pp- see your travel agent for details.

Cruisey Christmas close to home

CRYSTAL Cruises is promoting its 2012 local Christmas cruise onboard *Crystal Symphony*.

Departing on 20 December from Auckland, *Symphony's* Christmas voyage is scheduled to include calls at Tauranga, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin, as well as cruising Millford, Dusky and Doubtful Sounds in New Zealand.

Symphony will also spend two nights in Sydney (including NYE for a fantastic view of all the fireworks excitement) and will call overnight in Melbourne.

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breaking news as it comes to
hand...



Not So Subtle Seattle

by: Roderick Eime

I last visited Seattle in May 2009 when the city was on the verge of a major overhaul and it was interesting to see one of the world's Top 50 most livable cities transform in this short time.

The new light rail was under test along the waterfront ahead of its official opening last December and I had the chance to test it on my trip to Hotel Five on Fifth Ave near the Seattle Center. Up until 2005, historic ex-Melbourne trams ran along the waterfront but plans for their return are unclear.

The biggest news from the home of Starbucks is the demolition of the unsightly Alaskan Way, a 60-year-old overpass that rang along the waterfront much like Sydney's Cahill Expressway. The heavy machinery moved in last October and reduced the quake damaged roadway to rubble to make way for a massive rejuvenation project along the waterfront from Century Link Stadium, past the aquarium and Pike Place to the Bell Harbour cruise terminal.

According to the developers, www.waterfrontseattle.org, the waterfront program will include 'continuous' and 'event-based' activities. Strolling, jogging, biking, driving, and parking are supported along the entire length of the waterfront, whereas event-based programs will happen in strategic locations to maximize synergies with existing destinations. Pier 62/63 will be the focus of much activity including rollerskating, sun bathing, concerts, ice skating, swimming, events, market and views to the bay. See the website for comprehensive details of the development.

All this refurbishment will hold the city in good stead as it continues to win more business from its nearby rival port, Vancouver, across the border.

Brad Jones, director of tourism development for SCVB, tells me

Seattle now has more sailings than its Canadian rival and has essentially captured the market for Alaskan cruise departures. This is due, Jones says, because of the perception that it is easier for US citizens to use a domestic port and the relative cost of airfares to Seattle.

This year, the Port of Seattle expects in excess of 200 ship visits delivering more than 430,000 passengers, a number that seems set to rise. This year and next, new and returning ships to include Seattle in their itineraries are Celebrity Cruises' 2850-passenger *Solstice*, Oceania's 684-passenger *Regatta*, Norwegian Cruise Line adds a third vessel while Disney returns to Seattle after two seasons in Vancouver. The famous Rocky Mountaineer railroad also begins routes to Seattle in 2013.

Port of Seattle spokesman, Peter McGraw, added that "because the Port of Seattle also includes Sea-Tac International Airport, we are able to provide the added convenience of boarding passes for passengers disembarking from cruise vessels along with handling their baggage. Furthermore airfares into Sea-Tac (SEA) tend to be lower than at our competitor's closest airports."

Australians wishing to reach Seattle will need to fly into either Vancouver (eg Air Canada), San Francisco (eg United) or LAX (eg Virgin, Air NZ or Qantas) then connect with a local airline, probably Alaskan, which hubs out of Seattle.

Seattle, I've found, is an Aussie-friendly city with familiar transport systems, like-minded and enriching tourism attractions in, or close to the city centre and excellent quality accommodation at reasonable prices.

Stay: www.hotelfiveseattle.com More Info: www.VisitSeattle.org.



Seattle Cruise Port with Space Needle



Aerial image of Seattle



Artist impression of new waterfront

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THE *Intrigue* OF THE *East*



The newly upgraded *Minerva* has arrived.

With two restaurants, three lounges and two bars, *Minerva* now has more space, more choice and is more special than ever. Choose to dine in the newly named Swan Restaurant, or the more informal Veranda. As well as the Darwin lounge, you can now enjoy Swan's Guest Speaker talks in the new Orpheus Lounge. The Shackleton Bar has now also been extended to allow more passengers to enjoy its relaxed atmosphere.

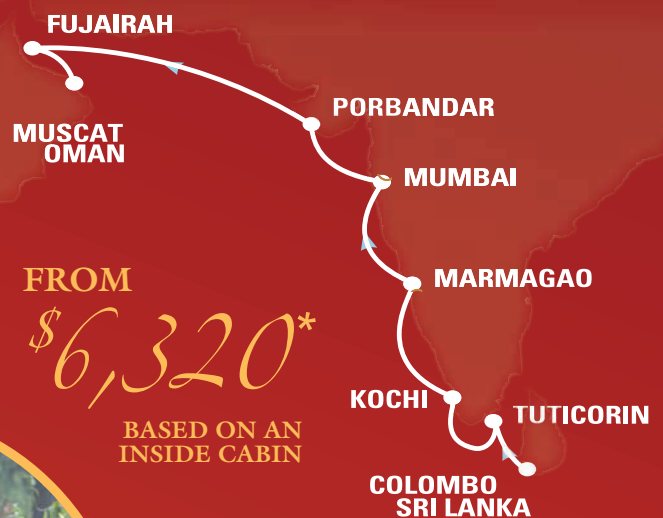
Minerva's upgrade has seen the addition of 32 new balconies to existing cabins, creating 44 balcony cabins in total. All 181 passenger cabins have also received new en suite facilities and soft furnishings throughout, as well as new Egyptian Cotton bed linen in the suites with balconies.

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