

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 31 July 2012

Navy clears the Garden Island record

The navy has hit back at recent media reportage over Government plans to expand cruise capacity at Garden Island, telling personnel that what has been agreed will not adversely affect its operations.

IN a letter to navy personnel Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Ray Griggs hit back at what he called selective reportage by media regarding the navy and enhanced access for cruise ships to Garden Island.

In response, Griggs said "The media reporting that has occurred since the announcement has, as you can see, misrepresented what was actually announced by the Prime Minister".

Griggs went further to outline what the expansion plans announced by the Prime Minister mean, saying that there will be three cruise ships visits to Fleet Base East (garden island) during the 2012-13 cruise season and another three visits in the 2013-14 season.

The second component to the plan, according to Griggs, is the intention to develop a longer term plan relating to the needs of the cruise industry.

"As you all know berthing space at Fleet Base East will be at a premium once the LHDs [Landing Helicopter Docks, which are currently being built in Spain] arrive commencing in 2014, this is why there is a need, as the Prime Minister announced, for a longer term plan, one that accommodates other interests but does not compromise the primary purpose of

Fleet Base East and Garden Island," he said.

"Navy will continue to work collaboratively on this significant policy issue.

"What has been agreed and announced does not adversely impact our ability to operate at Fleet Base East and Garden Island," he added.

MSC's Super Family Cabins

MSC'S newly released 2012-13 brochure features a host of goodies including itineraries onboard a new ship, the 140,000-tonne *MSC Preziosa* (launching in March next year), new ports of call and larger 'super family cabins'.

Created specifically for the Australian market, the brochure is packed with 150 cruise itineraries onboard a record 13 ships cruising to 150 ports from the West and East Mediterranean, Northern Europe, South America, South Africa, the Caribbean and the Red Sea.

Highlights of the brochure include the new Super Family Cabins, available on *MSC Divina* and *MSC Preziosa*, which sleep up to six people and comprise of two connecting triple cabins, two bathrooms and two balconies.

Each of these cabins comes at a fixed per-cabin price, regardless of how many people use it.

The brochure also features a 50% reduction on single supplements (for selected cabins), and no single supplements for suites in the MSC Yacht Club.

In addition the new brochure features zero single supplements on selected departures from Genoa and Venice in 2013.

For more details on the program, or to grab a copy of the brochure see your local travel agent.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of **CW** features four pages of the latest cruise news, plus see **p5** for details on Swan Hellenic's Sri Lankan Shores itinerary from Singapore to Colombo, departing 13 Feb 2013.

Mekong suite upgrades

PASSENGERS can receive a free suite upgrade on the *MS AmaLotus* on Botanica's eight-day tropical plants and culture cruise along the Mekong River next year.

Departing 04 February from Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, the cruise wraps up in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

This botanically-themed cruise is scheduled for spring when it is cooler and dryer and the region's plants are flowering.

Guides and lecturers include Ross McKinnon, curator of the Brisbane Botanical Gardens, and Australia's leading botanical artist Jenny Phillips.

The holiday is priced from \$3,695 per person twin-share, which covers 21 meals, excursions and sightseeing, airport transfers, tipping, port charges, soft drinks, local beer and wine at all times during the cruise, as well as 'Freedom of Choice' touring with botanical options at Phnom Penh.

The upgrade suite offer must be booked by 30 September 2012.

Call 1300 305 202 or visit the website www.botanica.travel.

Russian feasts and flights

AUSTRALIA'S Scenic Tours is offering free flights for the second person travelling on its 15-day 'Imperial Jewels of Russia' river cruise, if booked before 30 September.

As another special treat, passengers are taken out for dinner at Podvorye, Russia's most authentic restaurant.

An included part of the Scenic Enrich program, which comprises exclusive events to culturally enhance the cruising experience, the Russian feast includes produce and wine from the owner's home and vineyard, as well as vodka served by a bear.

The restaurant has established a reputation among aristocrats, actors, athletes, politicians and royals.

Fares start at \$7,295 per person twin share and also includes all meals on board, all excursions, events and entertainment, airport transfers and tipping.

See a travel agent or scenictours.com.au.

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Cruise Calendar	
<i>Cruise Weekly's</i> cruise calendar details upcoming port calls of passenger cruise ships at various destinations in Australia.	
SYDNEY <i>Pacific Pearl</i> <i>Pacific Jewel</i> <i>Pacific Pearl</i>	Thu 02 Aug Sun 05 Aug Sun 05 Aug
BRISBANE <i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Sat 04 Aug
DARWIN <i>Dawn Princess</i> <i>Coral Princess</i> <i>Coral Princess</i>	Thu 02 Aug Thu 09 Aug Fri 10 Aug

Cruising the Murray and SA

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises and SeaLink Travel Group has released its new Murray River & South Australia brochure.

Titled 'Discover Murray River, Adelaide and Kangaroo Island South Australia', the brochure provides an in-depth look at river cruising in Australia, as well as the facilities, accommodation and deck plans of the *Murray Princess*.

For the first time ever, the brochure also includes touring options on Kangaroo Island, in the Barossa, Adelaide and the Adelaide Hills. See www.captaincook.com.au/brochures.

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-day Pacific Island cruise onboard *Pacific Pearl*

- **From:** \$819
- **Departs:** 26 September 2012
- **Visits:** Noumea, Lifou, Mystery Island, Isle of Pines.
- **Includes:** nine-night cruise accommodation, all onboard meals, onboard gratuities, and port charges and taxes.
- **Contact:** www.ecruising.travel

P&O announces last-minute Pack 'n' Go

A new type of fare has been introduced for travellers who can cruise at short notice.

CHEAPER pricing is on the way for Australians who are less fussy about cabin allocations and planning their holidays a year ahead.

P&O Cruises last week revealed to travel agents that it would offer new 'Pack 'n' Go' deals for people who can take a cruise close to the departure date.

Available on select sailings, the new fares recognise that some cruisers are happy to make a booking with a short lead time.

"While most of our passengers book their cruise six to 12 months ahead in order to secure their preferred itinerary and their cabin of choice, there are clearly some

travellers who make a more impulsive decision to holiday and book quite close to the sailing date," said Complete Cruise Solution's director of sales, Don Clark.

"This new fare type recognises that market and reflects an international trend towards different fare structures for short and long lead bookings."

Complete Cruise Solution represents P&O, Princess Cruises, P&O World Cruising, Cunard Line and Carnival Cruise Line in Australia.

The new "Pack 'n' Go" fares will be for new P&O bookings only.

"Pack 'n' Go" passengers will be guaranteed their cabin type, with final cabin allocation made within 30 days of departure.

Full payment is required within 24 hours for bookings made through travel agents.

Passengers booking further in advance will continue to be able to select their cabin of choice when they book, Clark said.

Royal selection of wines

ROYAL Caribbean is inviting guests to come behind the scenes with its sommeliers and learn about its wine sourcing and offerings in a new online video, [CLICK HERE](#) to view.

Another Royal ship?

THE CEO and Chairman of Royal Caribbean Cruises has apparently indicated that a new vessel may be ordered soon.

During a conference call with financial analysts last week, when asked whether a ship order could come in the next few months, Richard Fain said: "We clearly are looking at that sort of thing."

The company has been dropping hints about its next creation since it launched the world's biggest megaliner, the 5,400-passenger *Allure of the Seas* in 2010.

According to a report in *USA Today*, Fain would not elaborate on the size or if it would be a Royal Caribbean or Celebrity brand.

But he did note the company's growth has slowed because of fewer orders in recent years.

"From 2012 through 2016, our berth capacity growth is less than 3%, and in fact, we don't have any ship deliveries in 2013 at all."

Fain said new capacity was needed to expand into new markets.

Moving *Voyager of the Seas* from Europe to Asia has "actually brought down our capacity in the existing markets", he said.

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Cruising Canada gets easier

FROM 12 August this year, the Canada Border Services Agency will pilot a new Cruise Ship Gateway Strategy which will see it fully clear vessels whose first Canadian port of call is either Nova Scotia, St John's, Newfoundland or Halifax.

This "full clearance" will cover admissibility (immigration) and goods (customs), and once cleared, cruise ships will be able to navigate all ports in Canada with "greater ease".

In addition, passengers will also be able to disembark and embark without the need for any further Canada Border Services Agency clearance, however this is only applicable if the ship does not dock at a foreign port in between its Canadian calls.

RCI and Costa return to Bahrain?

THE Kingdom of Bahrain is said to be expecting Royal Caribbean and Costa Cruise Lines to return their respective vessels to its shores, after the pair postponed services to the island nation due to political unrest in the region.

According to Bahrain's Tourism Marketing and Promotion Acting Director, Mohammed Al Subaie, "the cruise lines are considering returning ships to Bahrain based on the progress and stabilisation made in the previous months".

Despite the nation's optimism, there has however been no official word from either Royal Caribbean or Costa Cruises as to whether they will return to Bahrain in the near future.



GOT expensive taste?

Guests who like to splash out on fancy foods whilst whiling away their hours at sea will be excited to learn that Silversea is bringing the world's most expensive food to the ocean, the edible gold leaf.

Selling for a mere US\$15,000 per pound, the edible gold leaf will debut onboard Silversea's Relais and Châteaux fine dining restaurant Le Champagne.

As for which dish will be laced with gold, you'd better like rice, because the meal is a decadent Gold Leaf Risotto.

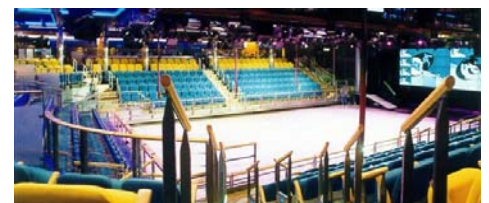
And if you don't like rice, then you may have to miss out on eating gold, but you will have plenty of choices at Le Champagne, which costs guests \$30 to eat at and features an extensive range of dishes spanning across four regionally and seasonally inspired menus, which rotate according to region and season.

Sun, sand and ice?

ROYAL Caribbean has partnered with this year's Winter Festivals to give Australians a taste of the fun that awaits them onboard *Voyager of the Seas* when she arrives this November.

At a recent event, held on the ice-rink at the Bondi Winter Festival, located on the sandy edge of arguably Sydney's most iconic beach, newly appointed PR manager for Royal Caribbean Australia, Allison Brennan, joined Royal Caribbean Australia's commercial manager Adam Armstrong to give media an insight into the fun that can be had on the ice, as well as *Voyager's* Studio B ice rink.

Studio B seats 700 guests and will offer Aussies 45-minute ice-skating sessions at scheduled times during sea days, as well as Learn to Skate sessions, and evening events such as disco skating and rock 'n' roll skating, and a professional ice-skating show.



Pictured above is Voyager's Studio B ice rink



Port Review: Kusadasi, Turkey

by Cruise Sales Manager, Roger Condon

Turkey offers an incredible array of sightseeing opportunities. Under foot, you're likely to be walking the same path as the Crusaders, visit the city of Troy, where according to legend 1,000 ships arrived to reclaim Helen, be introduced to the Roman Empire at Ephesus, or take time to reflect at Gallipoli. Couple this with inviting sun-drenched resort areas, rich shopping expeditions, dazzling mosques and vibrant city life you could easily spend several weeks here.

Although you'd most likely not come here for Kusadasi itself, it is the cruise gateway to one of the best-preserved ancient Greek and Roman cities in the Mediterranean, Ephesus. The pier/dock area is modern allowing several ships to dock at once and it's an easy, 10-minute level walk into the heart of Kusadasi. The tour coach parking area is designed well (accessible only through a shopping mall of course), and there are taxis just outside the pier gate. You must set the rate with the driver before taking a taxi and be prepared to be coaxed into a shopping stop...be strong!

Kusadasi consists of shopping and more shopping. Turkish rugs/carpet, jewellery, bazaars with alleged designer clothes and more are available, but it's the game that's played between shopper and vendor that offers the real fun. You simply must haggle for the best bargain, or you'll be paying way too much. Some people are not comfortable haggling, but try not to take it too seriously. Have fun with it and you'll soon get the knack. You should never be paying the 1st price offered, or even the 2nd, or 3rd, and don't begin the game if you have no intention of buying. There are also some good local restaurants here.

The major reason for stopping in Kusadasi is to get to Ephesus. You could spend two hours or all day here. There are elaborate Roman public buildings and you can even test the acoustics in the 24,000 seat Amphitheatre. Select a tour that includes the beautiful terrace houses. Your ship will offer half day Ephesus only tours, or full days that include lunch, the spiritual sights of the House of Virgin Mary, the Basilica of St. John and Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World. If it's your 2nd visit here, there are other Greek and Roman sites worth your attention, such as Miletus and Didyma.

Roger's Quick Tips

Best Months: April - October

Don't Miss: Apple tea & stunning Turkish carpet demo

Tour or Not: Whatever you do, you need a guide

Sightseeing: Ephesus, Didyma, Miletus

Food: So much to sample!

Language: Turkish

Currency: Euro

Shopping: Everywhere you turn

Cash or Card: Credit Card, USD or Euro



Library of Celsus, Ephesus

By Roger Condon, cruise sales manager, Discover the World Marketing - with 15 years at sea.

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Follow us on:

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



Olympic fever spreads to the sea

by: Louise Goldsbury

The world's cruise industry has been getting into the sporting spirit. Even the Olympic torch likes cruising.

After its 70-day tour, the well-travelled flame completed its final leg by barge along the River Thames.

A couple of cruise ships also sailed into London in time to soak up the Games atmosphere.

Silversea's *Silver Cloud* arrived last Wednesday night, after a 16-day journey from Copenhagen, providing its 296 passengers with a special sailing through the heart of the city.

The luxury ship passed under the Tower Bridge, which was already lit up with the famous five-rings logo, and moored next to the Royal Navy's *HMS Belfast*.

Peter Deilmann's *MS Deutschland*, the largest vessel ever to come into West India Dock, has taken up residence for three weeks.

The ship is housing the official partners of the German team and will also host the Champions Club, where athletes are expected to celebrate and relax after their events.

Fred Olsen Cruise Line's *Braemar* and ex-Happy Cruises' *Gemini* (currently for sale) are at Royal Albert Dock, hosting thousands of bus drivers and security staff.

In addition, *Caledonian Sky*, co-owned by Australia's APT, has been chartered as a floating hotel.

Unfortunately, the new cruise terminal at Greenwich, which was planned to open in time for the Olympics, has not been built yet.

Preliminary work is due to start in November, with cruise ships set to dock at Enderby Wharf in 2014, although according to the latest reports, construction is not due to finish for another five years.

Meanwhile, cruise ships around the world are tuning in to the Games.

MSC's fleet is broadcasting live coverage of 29 sports and the opening and closing ceremonies.

Olympic-themed entertainment will include onboard parades of different nationalities and singing anthems around the pool.

Guests can place bets on the finals and participate in football, ping pong, darts and shuffleboard tournaments, or fully-clothed relays in the pool.

MSC's cocktails have also been renamed, such as the "Tour de France" Aperol Spritz served during the cycling.

Celebrity Cruises will broadcast online via satellite competitions in swimming, diving, gymnastics, rowing, cycling, athletics and basketball, as well as daily surveys of the best moments of all other sports.

Major events will be repeated for American passengers so they can watch the competitions at a more convenient time of day.

Passengers can watch from their cabins or several bars onboard Celebrity ships in Alaska, Bermuda, Scandinavia, Russia, the Mediterranean and along the Adriatic Sea.

The only exception is *Celebrity Xpedition*, which sails year-round in the Galapagos.

Royal Caribbean is recruiting former Olympians, figure skater Michelle Kwan and diver Greg Louganis, for a "deck-athlon" aboard *Oasis of the Seas*.

The two Americans will compete in 10 events including surfing the FlowRider, climbing the rock wall, zip-lining across the Boardwalk, skating in the ice rink, diving at the AquaTheatre, playing mini-golf, basketball and blackjack, and decorating cupcakes.

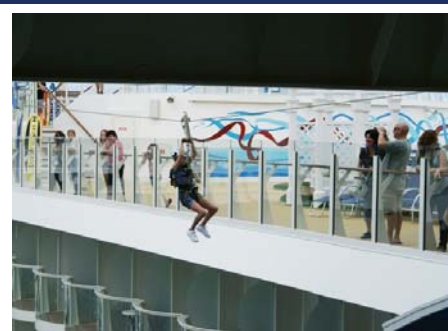
The contest is being televised in the US and the public can vote for the winner on Facebook.



Ms Deutschland hosts the Germans



Silver Cloud and the London Olympics



Zip-lining in the 'deck-athlon'

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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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