

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 20 March 2012

Norwegian ship likely within two years

Norwegian Cruise Line may base a ship in Australia in 2014 after it launches *Breakaway* and *Getaway*.

IT'S the only major 'big ship' company without a superliner in Sydney, but Norwegian looks set to "join the party", according to Nicole Costantin, regional vice president, sales and marketing, Australia & New Zealand.

Costantin told *Cruise Weekly* yesterday that it was the logical next step to send a Norwegian ship to Australia.

"I think we will, in the next two years," she said.

"You just have to look at the fact we're launching two new ships [in 2013 and 2014] so our other ships have to move somewhere, and

where do you go? Where you don't have any ships."

Norwegian management has repeatedly discussed cruising from Australia, Costantin said, adding that it was important to send a "newer" ship, because Australians were now accustomed to better quality vessels.

Visiting Sydney this week are two of the line's top bosses: Francis Riley, vice president and general manager international; and Braydon Holland, vice president sales.

"Australia is significant for us – it's our fourth biggest international market after the UK, Germany and Spain, which is incredible," Riley told reporters on Monday.

He said the 2500-passenger *Pride of America* in Hawaii remained the number-one choice for Australians for two reasons.

"Hawaii is our nearest destination to Australia, and we have exclusivity as the only ship offering inter-island cruising without having to touch a US port, such as Mexico, which adds four or five days to our competitors' itineraries."

Riley also underlined the special features debuting on the new 4,000-passenger *Norwegian Breakaway*, such as The Waterfront and 678 Ocean Place.

"Decks 6, 7 and 8 will become the hub of the ship, with alfresco dining around deck 8, and we will also have our first seafood restaurant," Riley said.

The new concept includes an oceanfront boardwalk lined with shops, 17 dining venues and 12 bars and lounges spread over three decks. *Breakaway* will be home-ported year-round in New York, sailing weeklong cruises to Bermuda, from April 2013.

Norwegian Pearl, which is to be based in New York this year, will move out when *Breakaway* moves in.

Itineraries for the second new ship, *Norwegian Getaway*, launching in 2014, are yet to be revealed.

APT's solo traveller deals

THE solo traveller supplement on a selection of APT's 15-day Rhine, Rhone and Moselle river cruises, has been slashed by half, for bookings made before 31 March 2012.

Prices for the cruise start from \$8,642 (normally \$10,290), and are applicable to select departures between March and November this year.

For details, see your travel agent.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

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

Tell us about your own cruise

CRUISE Weekly is once again opening the gates for its readers to send their own stories of cruise adventures, for a chance to have their story published in an upcoming issue, as well as score two movie tickets.

So get your writing caps on and send your stories to mycruise@cruiseweekly.com.au, for your chance to win.

The winning entry will be announced in the coming weeks so good luck!

Buy one, get one free in Fiji

GUESTS who book a cabin with Blue Lagoon Cruises will get a 50% discount on a second cabin, for all departures (including three- four- and seven-day sailings) between 03-28 Apr 2012.

See your travel agent for details, or email reservations@blc.com.fj.

SeaDreaming on the Black Sea

EVER dreamed of living the life of the rich and famous in the French Riviera? SeaDream can make that happen for guests travelling on a selection of its 2013 European summer voyages onboard *SeaDream I* and *SeaDream II*.

Both vessels will make a number of long port calls to St Tropez during the summer season (staying late to allow guests to soak up the night life), offering for the first time ever "wet landings" by small craft right onto famous Pampelonne Beach, which has been described as "the place to see and be seen on the French Riviera".

Other standouts in SeaDream's 2013 summer season include a rare visit to Cyprus, during *SeaDream I*'s 10-night roundtrip sailing from Athens through the Greek Islands and the Turkish Turquoise Coast, which departs on 02 October 2013; as well as a 13-night Black Sea circumnavigation, departing Istanbul on 17 August 2013, visiting Bulgaria, Romania, the Ukraine, and Russia.

Earlybird pricing for the 10-night voyage starts at US\$7609pp twin-share (nearly 40% off the brochured US\$12,510pp); whilst earlybird pricing for the Black Sea sailing starts from US\$10,167pp twin-share (a one-third saving on the brochured US\$15,268pp).

For details, see your travel agent.



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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>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Sat 24 Mar
BRISBANE <i>Pacific Dawn</i> <i>Regatta</i>	Sat 24 Mar Tue 27 Mar
CAIRNS <i>Ocean Princess</i> <i>Pacific Sun</i> <i>Regatta</i> <i>L'Austral</i>	Wed 21 Mar Thu 22 Mar Fri 23 Mar Sat 24 Mar
PORT DOUGLAS <i>Dawn Princess</i>	Thu 22 Mar
DARWIN <i>Dawn Princess</i> <i>Ocean Princess</i>	Sun 25 Mar Sun 25 Mar
TOWNSVILLE <i>L'Austral</i> <i>Pacific Sun</i>	Fri 23 Mar Fri 23 Mar
AUCKLAND <i>Volendam</i> <i>The World</i>	Tue 27 Mar Tue 27 Mar
WELLINGTON <i>Radiance of the Seas</i> <i>Volendam</i> <i>Pacific Pearl</i>	Wed 21 Mar Thu 22 Mar Sat 24 Mar
TAURANGA <i>Volendam</i>	Sun 25 Mar

Silversea collision

SILVERSEA Cruises' *Silver Shadow* has sustained minor damage after colliding with a container ship off the coast of Vietnam overnight.

The incident occurred in deep fog, with the Silversea vessel reportedly punching a hole in the cargo ship and knocking passengers off their feet, according to *CNN*.

Passengers were summoned to their muster stations but were not evacuated, with Silversea saying its ship "incurred limited minor dents and guests' safety was never compromised".

There were no injuries on the cruise ship which continued to Ha Long Bay where all shore tours operated normally, Silversea said.

Viking orders six more longships

Viking River Cruises has commissioned another six vessels for 2013, on top of six new ships already on the way this year.

THERE seems to be no stopping Viking and its liking for launching new ships.

The company has announced it has placed orders for six of its most revolutionary vessels, to be delivered next year.

And tomorrow it will christen the newly built *Viking Freya*, *Viking Idun*, *Viking Njord* and *Viking Odin* – which are set to be followed later in the year by the slightly delayed *Viking Embla* and *Viking Aegir*.

With the dozen additional vessels, Viking will have invested more than US\$400 million in its fleet development program over three years, expanding to 31 ships since its 1997 inception.

"The new orders reflect the great interest in Viking River Cruises and its revolutionary longships," said chairman Torstein Hagen.

He said the patent-pending design would combine "cutting-edge technology with comfortable amenities", such as the all-weather Aquavit Terrace.

The indoor/outdoor terrace will have retractable floor-to-ceiling glass doors allowing passengers to enjoy the scenery while dining "alfresco".

Two Explorer Suites, the largest in Europe at 41 square metres, will have a separate lounge room, bedroom and wraparound veranda offering 270-degree views.

Two-room veranda suites will have a full-size

veranda in the lounge room and a French balcony in the bedroom.

In-cabin features have also been enhanced, with heated bathroom floors and mirrors, Sony HD TVs and premium toiletries.

Sustainability upgrades include solar panels, an onboard organic herb garden and energy-efficient hybrid engines that reduce vibrations for a smoother ride.

"The ancient vikings were the ultimate explorers, and that tradition lives at Viking River Cruises today," said Hagen.

"For that reason, we have honoured our new Viking longships with names of celebrated Viking gods and heroes."

See www.vikingrivercruises.com for details.



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Kids cruise free in Easter

WONDERING what to do with the kids this Easter? Captain Cook Cruises may have the answer, with its Kids Cruise Free deal.

The Kids Cruise Free deal applies to CCC's the Weekend Breakfast cruise, Seafood Buffet Lunch cruise and Sydney Harbour Coffee cruises between 06-22 April, and one child to cruise for free per paying adult.

The Weekend Breakfast cruise includes a delicious hot and cold buffet breakfast and is \$55 per adult; whilst the Seafood Buffet Lunch cruise is priced from \$75 per adult, including a sightseeing cruise of Sydney; and the Coffee cruise is priced from \$49 per adult including a scenic cruise and morning and afternoon tea.

For details, see your travel agent or visit www.captaincook.com.au.

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:

2012 Jewel Escapade

- **From:** \$739pp for an inside cabin through to \$1539 for a balcony
- **Departs:** Sydney 19 April 2012
- **Returns:** Sydney 27 April 2012
- **Visits:** South Pacific including Noumea, Mare and Isle of Pines, all in New Caledonia.
- **Includes:** Up to \$100 onboard credit per cabin, 8 nights *Pacific Jewel* cruise accommodation, onboard meals, port charges and government taxes.
- **Contact:** www.ecruising.travel

Red arrows for Cunard event

CUNARD Line has today announced that British aerial display team the Red Arrows will be an extra highlight of the company's Three Queens Diamond Jubilee Event in Southampton on Tuesday 5th June.

The Cunard celebration of 60 years of Her Majesty The Queen's reign is expected to be the biggest party outside London over the extended bank holiday weekend, with all three ships of the Cunard fleet to sail up the Solent in formation for the first time.

It will also be the first time the Red Arrows will have performed over Southampton.

Plenty of cruise ship fuel for Sydney Harbour

CALTEX is set to bring a larger bunker tanker to Sydney to meet the huge growth in demand from the cruise ship market.

The oil company says its current bunker tanker can't service the cruise industry because it can't travel around to Sydney Harbour from its Botany Bay base.

The new double-hulled tanker named the *Anatoma* will be able to make this transit, with Caltex Australia saying this is "an important step in helping alleviate some of the concerns about fuel supply for Sydney Harbour's cruise visits".

MEANWHILE Sydney Ports Corporation together with Caltex yesterday undertook a joint emergency test exercise to gauge their responsiveness to the threat of an oil spill in Botany Bay.

The test consisted of a simulated situation whereby a crude oil tanker containing 6000 tonnes of oil suffered engine failure, colliding with a mooring "dolphin" at Kurnell wharf in the south of Sydney.

Sydney ports ceo Grant Gilfillan said prior to the exercise would test procedures and equipment, as well as ensuring that communication systems between Sydney Ports and Caltex were all in sync with other supporting agencies in the NSW State Waters Marine Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan.

"Up to 35 Sydney Ports and 10 Caltex personnel will be involved in the exercise, utilising a range of oil spill equipment such as containment booms, skimmers and decontamination units," Mr Gilfillan added.

In the 2010/11 financial year, Sydney Ports processed over 12-million tonnes of crude and refined oil products through shipping berths in Kurnell in Botany Bay and Gore Cove in Sydney Harbour.



FORGET yachts as a status symbol for the rich and famous - the latest trend is to have your very own submarine.

According to US journalist Christina Ng from *Good Morning America*, the mega-rich are increasingly looking underwater for their thrills, with notable submarine owners including movie director James Cameron as well as human headline Sir Richard Branson.

Cameron - who is ironically famous for directing *Titanic* - has this week launched a mission to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, hoping to make the seven mile downward dive on his own to set a new world record

And last April Branson unveiled a single-person underwater craft which he claimed would expand frontiers by exploring the five deepest undersea locations.

Louis Cruises repositioning

CYPRUS-based Louise Cruises has flagged a change in its product positioning, aiming to return more strongly to its Greek roots.

Media reports in the US quote the firm's ceo Kyriakos Anastassiadis saying that first and foremost Louis is a "Cypriot company, which has much of its itineraries in the eastern Mediterranean.

"We know our area, we know our region, and we know our ports and islands," he said.

Anastassiadis said that even international clients want an "authentic" Greek experience, with Louis expected to change its menus, itineraries and even onboard wine to reflect its Hellenic heritage.

Silver Spirit upgrades

SILVERSEA Cruises is offering a cabin upgrade offer for passengers combining four seven-day Mediterranean cruises into a 28-day journey.

Staterooms for the four-week voyage aboard the exclusive 270-passenger *Silver Spirit* start at \$16,290 per person twin share for a Vista Suite, which will receive an upgrade to a Veranda Suite.

The cruise odyssey departs 25 June from Istanbul, arriving into Barcelona on 23 July and will visit 22 ports in Turkey, Greece, Montenegro, Croatia, Italy, Sicily, Corsica, Monaco and France.

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Avalon to add yet another 'suite ship'

AVALON Waterways will add another vessel to its ever-expanding fleet next year, this week announcing the construction of the 83-cabin *Avalon Expression*.

The new vessel adds to the already-announced 64-cabin *Avalon Artistry* which is set to debut in April 2013.

Both ships will be modelled on the *Avalon Panorama* which the operator said had been a "sell-out success" since its introduction last year - and has proved particularly popular with Australians.

The cruise line's local head, Stewart Williams, had significant input into the design of

Panorama meaning that it incorporates features reflecting Aussie preferences.

Fellow Suite Ships *Avalon Vista* and *Avalon Visionary* will join *Panorama* this year in a double christening scheduled for May.

"Australia has become Avalon's fastest growing market worldwide, thanks largely to the success of the suite ships," Williams said.

"Our river cruise bookings in Australia are currently 40 per cent above this time last year, and 2012 has already eclipsed all other sales records in this market," he added.

Avalon has already released a 2013 Preview brochure - see your travel agent for details.

New Regent Seven Seas dining

REGENT Seven Seas has announced the introduction of a new onboard eatery, with the launch of a "casual Italian restaurant" called *Sette Mari* at Le Veranda.

The new dining concept will not require reservations, offering indoor and outdoor dining with items on a self-serve buffet as well as a menu.

Sette Mari "offers the perfect complement to the dining venues on our ships," according to RSSC president Mark Conroy.

"After a full day ashore, guests can select appetisers and the house-made pasta on their own and be finished in as little as 45 minutes, or enjoy a leisurely evening ordering specialties from the menu," he said.

Sette Mari will launch on *Seven Seas Navigator* at the end of May, followed by *Seven Seas Voyager* on 02 Jul and *Seven Seas Mariner* on 13 July.

The restaurant's creative name is (naturally) Italian for "seven seas".



Port Review: St Petersburg, Russia

by Cruise Sales Manager, Rodger Condon

Rising in 1703 from the swamps, a great city was being born. With no less than three different names (Leningrad & Petrograd), St. Petersburg has a rollercoaster history which starts indelibly with Peter the Great, who imagined an opulent city rivalling all others in Europe, but it wasn't until Catherine the Great took the throne 60 years later that the imagining of a grand St. Petersburg became a reality.

When arriving be sure to be on deck for the sail, which lasts several hours with interesting sights either side of your ship. Depending on the size of your ship will determine where you dock. Smaller to mid-size ships are often able to sail right up the river and dock in visual sight and hearty walk of the Winter Palace and downtown, although this is never guaranteed.

Larger ships dock at the cruise ship terminal facility several km away, or a container port. Some cruise lines offer stays of 3 days/2 nights, others 2 days/1 night. I'd take the 3 day option, as there's plenty to do and it allows for a day trip to Moscow.

Additionally, there's the question of visas. You need a visa and all cruise ships offer the option of using the ship's Blanket Visa, usually at a cost. This visa, however, only allows you to participate in the ship's organised shore excursions. It does not allow you to step ashore independently, even to purchase a simple souvenir across the road! It's more expensive, but trust me obtain your own Russian visa before leaving home. You'll be so happy you did.

Even if you've seen St. Petersburg back in its Leningrad days, a return trip is well worth the effort. It's so much brighter! Highlights for any traveller are the Winter Palace/Hermitage, one of the greatest museums enriched by Catherine the Great and housing thousands of works of art; a walk along Nevsky Prospekt popping into a traditional Russian deli for caviar and vodka; touring the magnificent palaces of Peter and Catherine; taking in a ballet, or opera performance in the palace where Rasputin was killed; shopping for stunning works of art is so many forms, or winding your way around the flea markets where it's mostly fake items; there's so much more!

Roger's Quick Tips

Best Months: June - August

Don't Miss: Any of it!

Tour or Not: Tours are easier

Sightseeing: Hermitage, Church on Spilled Blood, the Palaces

Food: Caviar and Vodka (but be cautious of packaging)

Language: Russian

Shopping: Nevsky Prospekt, flea markets and everywhere your bus stops

Cash or Card: Cards in reputable places. USD\$/Roubles in markets.



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



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CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 20 March 2012



The Queen of the Harbour does not Float

by: Roderick Eime

SHE'S 80 years old and all of Sydney is celebrating. Honestly, I don't know if bridges have a gender at all, much less female, but the Germans think bridges are girls, so I'll go with that.

Yesterday, March 19, was the 80th anniversary of the much talked-about 1932 ribbon cutting that officially opened the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Poor Premier Jack Lang was upstaged by a mounted right-wing zealot with a sword and the rest, as is so often said, is history.

In those 80 years, the bridge has become as much a part of the harbour itself as the Opera House and Luna Park fascia. At least once every year she bursts into glorious splendour with fireworks to rapturous adulation. For the last decade it has been possible to (legally) scale her girders and stand triumphantly on her pinnacle. She has embraced Sydney as much as Sydney, and her millions of visitors, has embraced her.

It's hard to imagine that the many magazines and websites that voted Sydney the world's favourite cruise destination would have done so without the omnipresent bridge as our crowning glory.

There she is, like a 40,000 tonne tiara, welcoming every ship as they make their way into Circular Quay or, more recently, beyond to Darling Harbour. Coincidentally, her total weight of 53,800 tonnes was almost the same as many of the largest ships afloat at the time such as the massive 286m, 51,656 GT SS *Bremen* of Norddeutscher Lloyd.

But ships quickly became larger to the point where today's largest (such as the 53m high *Carnival Spirit* and *QM2*) will no longer fit under her span. 'Enough' she declares, 'I am queen of this city!'

Queen she may be, presiding over numerous historic events including the terrifying Japanese submarine attack of 1942 and the drawn-out, slow motion construction of her architectural counterpart, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Opera House. Jørn Utzon's masterpiece in fact took five years longer to build than the bridge.

14,000 workers toiled for eight years hammering in 6 million rivets with 16 falling to their deaths. The only one to survive was Irishman, Vincent Kelly, who landed feet first with his hands protecting his head although the urban legend has him dropping his tool belt/spanner/hammer to "break" his fall. He was back at work after six weeks of recovery.

For 60 years she bore the entire cross harbour traffic, including trains, until relieved by the tunnel in 1992, at which time she carried 182,000 vehicles every day. Initial toll was sixpence for a car and it is now as much as \$4, depending on the time of day, despite the AU£6.25 million cost being fully recouped in 1988.

It is also no surprise that the world's most prestigious cruise lines feature images of their illustrious vessels posing in front of the monumental structure, arrogantly presuming to add something to this already impressive vista.

While she effectively bars access to the western reaches of the harbour by the largest liners, she will continue to reign supreme over all she surveys to the east, imperiously denying passage to those vessels impertinent enough to challenge her grandeur. Long may she span!



The arrival of QM2 in 2007



The HMAS Sydney in 1941



P&O Arcadia and our bridge

Cruise Weekly is Australia's favourite online cruising publication. In production since 2007, **Cruise Weekly** is published each Tuesday, with a further travel industry update each Thursday.

Cruise Weekly is free and is sent to subscribers via email as an Adobe Acrobat PDF document.

Sign up for a free subscription at www.cruiseweekly.com.au.

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