

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 27 November 2012

Cunard offers free balcony upgrades

Cunard Line is giving Australians an early Christmas present with a seven-day sale on balcony staterooms.

FROM tomorrow morning, balcony cabins will be sold for the price of inside cabins on a range of 2013 world voyage sectors.

The offers include the chance to experience the Chinese New Year in Asia aboard *Queen Mary 2*, before disembarking in Australia.

A balcony, including complimentary upgrade, starts at \$1,999 per person twin-share for the 16-night voyage from Hong Kong to Brisbane and \$2,199 for 18 nights from Hong Kong to Sydney, departing 17 February 2013.

Also under the one-week sale, *Queen Victoria* balconies will be priced from \$2,499 per person twin-share for a 20-night voyage

from San Francisco to Sydney on 3 February 2013, or \$2,899 for a 23 nights from Sydney to Hong Kong departing 24 February.

Balcony staterooms are also available from \$1,796 per person on *Queen Elizabeth's* 15-night cruise from Los Angeles to Auckland departing on 4 February 2013.

The sale starts at 9am on 28 November and ends 4 December 2012.

For bookings, contact your travel agent or see www.cunard.com.

Falkland Islands cancellations

TWO ships have cancelled stops at the Falkland Islands, citing different reasons.

AIDAcara has dropped its scheduled 3 December visit to Port Stanley due to political tensions in Argentina, while Holland America's *Veendam* blames unpredictable weather.

Other media reports allege that cruise lines have been deterred by a violent attack on a shipping agent's office in Buenos Aires.

Protesters have vowed to prevent ships from berthing at Argentinean ports unless the Falklands stops are cancelled.

Earlier this year, P&O's *Adonia* and Princess Cruises' *Star Princess* were refused entry to the Argentinian port of Ushuaia because they had visited the Falklands.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of *CW* features four pages of all the latest cruise news and photos.

PLUS see **page five** for a full page from Cruise Select detailing special cruise deals.

Also, see **page six** for Oceania Cruises 2013 Alaska sailings.

Cruise Weekly comp winner!

CONGRATULATIONS to the lucky winner of last week's *Cruise Weekly* Australia Post comp, Leanne Russell from Middle Ridge, QLD.

For her efforts Leanne has won an Australia Post travel pack worth around \$300, containing a \$100 Australia Post Load & Go Travel Card, an \$80 voucher which can be redeemed for in-store Australia Post travel insurance, a \$49.95 TravelSIM, a worldwide travel adapter, a snooze travel pillow and a storage bag.



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Did You Know?

Carnival Cruise Lines

- ◆ Carnival Cruise Lines is the largest cruise line in the world. With 24 ships, Carnival Cruise Lines sees more than 4.2 million guests sailing with them each year. For the first time Carnival has deployed a ship outside the US, with *Carnival Spirit* now sailing from Sydney.
- ◆ *Carnival Spirit* is the newest and largest cruise ship to be home ported year round in Australia. She has an equivalent tonnage to 77 Manly ferries and if tipped on her stern, the 292.6 metre long ship would stretch more than 42 metres above the observation deck of Sydney Tower, the city's tallest building.
- ◆ In just one week over 55,000 eggs, 22,000 slices of bread, 18,000 prawns and 700kg of coffee beans will be consumed onboard *Spirit*.

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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>Carnival Spirit</i> | Tue 27 Nov |
| <i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i> | Thu 29 Nov |
| <i>Radiance of the Seas</i> | Thu 29 Nov |
| <i>Dawn Princess</i> | Fri 30 Nov |
| <i>Ocean Princess</i> | Sun 02 Dec |
| <i>Sea Princess</i> | Mon 03 Dec |
| <i>Pacific Jewel</i> | Tue 04 Dec |

BRISBANE

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| <i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i> | Tue 27 Nov |
| <i>Sun Princess</i> | Sun 02 Dec |

CAIRNS

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| <i>Volendam</i> | Wed 28 Nov |
|-----------------|------------|

Sydney port charges increase

DOCKING in Sydney Harbour is about to get a whole lot more expensive for cruise ships in 2013 with the NSW Government planning a fee increase of up to 4,000%.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* onboard *Celebrity Millennium* last week, head of Royal Caribbean's Australia and NZ operations, Gavin Smith, explained that the increase in tax was due to the NSW Government's plan to change the rate from a per hour charge, to a per passenger tax.

This would mean that the current \$2,500 charge for a 10-hour stay will change to a fee of \$20 per passenger, meaning that for larger ships (such as *Voyager of the Seas* with capacity for 3,500 guests), Royal Caribbean would be looking at a bill of \$70,000.

The new fee structure will come into effect in July 2013, and will see the \$20pp fee increase to \$25 in 2014 and \$30 in 2015.

"It's a dramatic jump and its on top of Sydney already being the most expensive port going around," Smith said.

In terms of dealing with the whopping increase, Smith said the challenge facing the industry is whether to pass the \$20 tax onto cruisers, or to simply absorb the whole lot, which with multiple calls to Sydney during the summer seasons would run-up a huge tab.

Gold Coast cruising conundrum

Royal Caribbean is chomping at the bit for a piece of the Gold Coast cruising pie, that is, if the project ever gets off the ground.

SPEAKING last week to *CW*, Royal Caribbean's Managing Director of Australia and NZ operations, Gavin Smith, said that "it's a really exciting local investment and if it got up it would be spectacular".

Smith posited that the best location for the terminal would be Sea World, saying that it's development would not be contingent on \$100 billion dollars being spent on a casino and "whatever is going to be built on that island".

"The navigation of it will get a pretty positive wrap and I think barring a few days a year everybody will be able to get in there," he added.

Whilst he was excited for the development, Smith did admit that there were elements which may halt or impede its actualisation, such as the cost of maintenance dredging.

The ongoing upkeep of the dredge, according to Smith, would be a cost lumped on top of the bill to dredge the channel initially (with estimates for that work ranging from \$24 to \$100 million), and would be required to keep the dredge deep, given that the Gold Coast wave action would continually work to fill the hole in.

According to current thinking, this maintenance cost would be around \$6-7 million per annum.

In addition, Smith named competition between Queensland ports for state funding as a possible delay to the development of a Gold Coast cruise terminal, as well as a cruise industry which won't provide a concrete guarantee that ships will visit, and various council and environmental concerns.

"So as far as the community, it's a really good thing," he said.

"If it ever happens or not, I think we're a long way from knowing," he added.

Joining in on the debate, Adam Armstrong, Commercial Manager for RCI Cruises Australia and New Zealand, told *CW* that "The Gold Coast development is of great interest to the company".

"What we need on the east coast is more ports where we can get big ships in, so if the Gold Coast is going to build a big terminal where we can get alongside without tendering

then we'll be there.

"Just tell us when. Just build it," he added.

MEANWHILE in other Gold Coast cruising news, the Queensland Government is calling for expressions of interest from the private sector for its Broadwater Marine Project, which will include the delivery of a cruise ship terminal on State Government-owned land "on The Spit or on Wave Break Island in the Broadwater".

"In addition to the terminal, proposals could include hotel, casino, entertainment, marina and super yacht facilities, retail, hospitality, community open space, recreation facilities and a mix of residential (types and tenure)," a statement from the state government said.

According to the Gold Coast City Council, recent research showed that the integrated tourism developments have the potential to inject \$750m in additional tourism revenue annually into the Gold Coast economy and create more than 10,000 jobs locally by 2020.



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Australians take their first Voyage

LAST Friday *Voyager of the Seas* burst onto the Sydney cruise scene with her first overnight cruise to nowhere.

One of the most anticipated events in the 2012 cruise calendar *Voyager's* first departure drew over three thousand paying customers.

In fact so heightened was the anticipation for *Voyager*, that when **CW** arrived, the queue to board snaked away from the ship and around circular quay, as passengers eager to discover *Voyager* and make the most of their one night adventure arrived earlier than their scheduled boarding time.

Unfortunately progress was also slowed by a norovirus scare from her previous cruise, which, in the interest of keeping her newest passengers healthy, led to extra cleaning of the ship and a stretching of staff, and meant that whilst guests could board and explore, they were unable to enter their cabins until 4pm.

Service in the dining areas was also slowed by the outbreak, with guests unable to serve themselves in the buffet, and longer than usual waits in-between courses in the main dining room.

Despite this set-back, the cruise was soon in full swing, with guests diving head-long into the plethora of entertainment options and eating experiences on offer, some choosing to kick-back in the spa or poolside with a cocktail, whilst most youngsters made a bee-line for the top deck sports centre which features a basketball court, inline skating course, mini-golf and rock climbing wall.

Guests also flocked in droves to the four-storey Promenade, where shops sported rows of elegant perfumes, and the old style English Pig and Whistle pub drew punters with the promise of a pint, whilst Ben & Jerry's dispensed ice-cream to those in need of a sugar hit.

And that sugar-spike was much needed for **CW**, as it seemed impossible to experience everything the ship had to offer in one evening, even though the entertainment kept going until 4am!

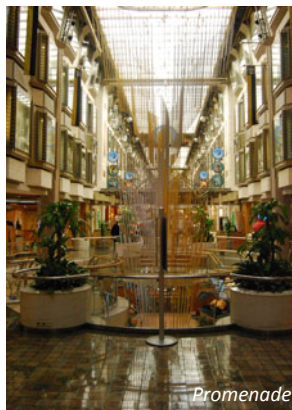
A magic show in La Scala Theatre; lounge, bar

and club bands; cocktail parties; discos; a DreamWorks character parade in the Royal Promenade; ice-skating spectaculars and deck parties were just some of the experiences laid on for guests.

And for those who like to eat, well they could have very well kept on munching away from the time they boarded until the wee hours of the morning, followed by a short break, then breakfast.

Following her arrival *Voyager* is now here for five months which will see her sail itineraries taking in Australia, NZ, and the South Pacific.

To see more pics go to facebook.com/cruiseweekly.



Promenade



Promenade gets busy

For more info see your local travel agent, or www.royalcaribbean.com.au.



CW nominates this couple for a cruise, immediately.

A warm-hearted Austrian couple, And Bertl and Irmi Reiterer, have abstained from taking a holiday for 17 years, due to their adopted pigeon.

Named Susi, the pigeon was discovered by And 17 years ago on the side of the road with a broken wing after having been hit by a car.

"We gave her some food and had her treated by a vet and put her in the garage downstairs," Mr Bertl said.

"It was clear that because of her injuries she would never fly again and at Christmas when I accidentally left the door open she came inside and then hopped into the oven which had just been used and was still warm - and refused to come out.

"We gave her a bit to eat in the oven. The next morning when she was still there we gave her some water, and she sort of just remained," he added.

The couple seem to structure their lives around Susi, including simple things such as not turning the dishwasher on until she has gotten out of the oven in the morning, as it wakes her up.

They downplayed suggestions that if food became scarce they could just turn the oven up for a tasty pigeon pie.

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Voyager in Sydney harbour

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Islands Made for Cruising - Part Four

by: Roderick Eime

Malta: World Heritage Ancient History

THE tiny island of Malta is tantalisingly placed amid the dense archaeological wonders of the eastern Mediterranean. Surrounded by the rich and complex Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Phoenician and Arabian histories, Malta maintains a set of impossibly ancient ruins that appear not to relate directly to any of the encompassing cultures. Among the most fascinating of these is the Hypogeum in Paola.

Inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1980, the Malta National Museum of Archaeology describes the site, albeit dryly, thus: "The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum is a unique structural masterpiece carved in the living rock. The monument seems to have served primarily as a cemetery over a period spanning several generations. The origins of the monument are unclear, but pottery fragments dating to the Zebbug phase suggest that the site may have become a cemetery by around 4000 BC. The Hypogeum remained in use till about 2500 BC."

The Hypogeum is but a gateway to many more sites on this historically rich island. Don't go past the Knights Fortifications around the harbours, the catacomb complexes, Mdina (Citta Vecchia), Qawra/Dwejra or the Victoria Lines Fortifications. Furthermore, Malta can legitimately claim to possess the planet's oldest still-standing buildings.

Local resident, Paul Zammit, compares the ruins to Stonehenge, saying "the megalithic temples situated on the Maltese archipelago are older, much more grandiose, more instructive (less fantasy is involved in their interpretation) and a 'must-see-to-believe' relics than the mere stonehenge in many people's opinion apart from mine!"

Malta is well serviced by the major cruise lines. See Costa Cruises, MSC Cruises, Cunard and P&O.

Malta Tourism: http://www.new.visitmalta.com/the_place.

Easter Island: The Mystery of the Moai

MANY people were introduced to the enigmatic stone Moai of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) via the outrageous extraterrestrial claims made by Erich von Daniken in his controversial book and documentary "Chariots of the Gods" where he suggested the great idols were constructed by aliens.

That theory is all but debunked, but as the truth behind the statues was revealed, the real mystery was just as engaging. How could an entire population, once thriving and healthy, destroy themselves so comprehensively? How did such a remote and under-resourced community construct these enormous carvings and then transport them overland to all corners of the island?

To visit Easter Island is to view not only an enduring archaeological mystery but an anthropological one as well. The famous 20th century explorer, Thor Heyerdahl, proposed that the population arrived from South America and even floated the raft, Kon-Tiki, there in an attempt to prove his theories. But, thanks to modern DNA, the few remaining indigenous Rapa Nui are undoubtedly Polynesian.

With just basic infrastructure and a relaxed, even lazy lifestyle, Easter Island is a fascinating landing. Minibus tours, walking, horse-riding or 4WD hire is the best way to explore. Be sure to visit the excellent little museum and as many Moai sites as possible in the time your cruise lines permits.

Easter Island's incredible remoteness makes a shipboard visit there unusual and is most often part of a round-the-world itinerary by more adventurous cruise lines. Coming up in 2013 the larger lines Princess, HAL, Oceania and P&O Int'l, while Cunard, Fred.Olsen and Crystal are looking at 2014 - see <http://www.chile.travel>.



Stunning Maltese harbour



The Hypogeum



Mysterious Moai

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