



Crystal announces new ports in Med

Maiden calls in 2013 will include Canakkale (Turkey), La Spezia (Italy) and Castellon de la Plana (Spain).

CRYSTAL Cruises has chosen historic and off-the-beaten path areas for first-time visits during its next Mediterranean season.



The maiden calls offer new exploration of the Dardanelles/Adriatic, the Italian Riviera and Costa del Azahar.

Itineraries ranging from seven to 13 days will also include overnight stays and extra port intensiveness.

Çanakkale, which offers easy access to Gallipoli and the archaeological site of Troy, is featured on two nine-day voyages:

Crystal Serenity's cruise from Rome, Sorrento (overnight) to Istanbul, via Sicily/Taormina, Santorini (9 May 2013) and *Crystal Symphony's* sailing in the reverse direction, via Valletta, Malta (25 July 2013).

La Spezia, a gateway to Cinque Terre, will be featured on a Sep cruise from Monte Carlo to Barcelona via Genoa, St Tropez and Marseille, France.

The 13th-century Valencian town of Castellon de la Plana is visited as part of the *Serenity's* 13-day journey from Rome to Florence, Porto Venere, Monte Carlo, Palamos, Barcelona, Cartagena, Gibraltar, Cadiz/Seville and Lisbon.

"After sailing for more than two decades, we're thrilled to still be finding novel destinations for our guests to discover, and combine them with much beloved locales to which they also love returning, time and time again," said Jack Anderson, svp sales and marketing.

For more information, see wiltrans.com.au.

Suspected pirates follow ship

THE *Azamara Journey* was pursued by pirates whilst sailing with near Oman last week.

According to reports, the ship was "aggressively approached" by a handful of small pirate boats.

Spotting the danger, *Journey's* Captain engaged in evasive action, whilst passengers were ushered to the interior of the vessel.

Journey's manoeuvres managed to deter the pirates, and it was not long until they gave up leaving the cruise liner to resume her itinerary.

Cruising from Australia will never be the same again.

Celebrity Solstice arrives in one week.

Celebrity **X** Cruises

Visit celebritycruises.com.au

Skagen development

THE Danish port of Skagen plans to develop its reception facilities with the addition of a new pier that will be able to accommodate larger cruise vessels up to 330 metres.

ALL THE CRUISE NEWS

Today's trade issue of **CW** features four pages jam packed with all the latest cruise news.

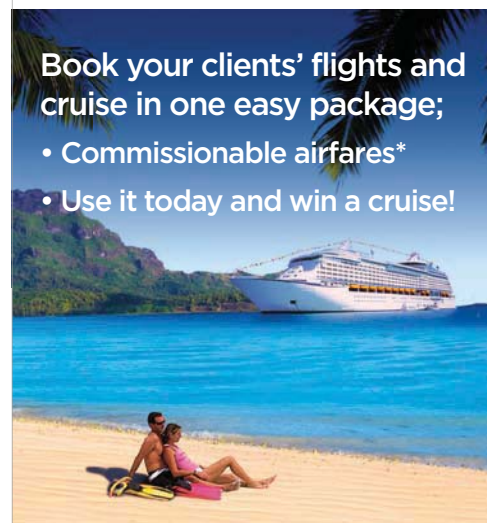


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Cruise News & Views



Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

2013 Events

With our local cruise season well underway there are many of us already looking well into 2013 and planning for another great year of cruising.

Cruise Industry Awards

The annual Cruise Industry Awards dinner will once again be held at the Hilton Sydney (Sat 9th Feb, 2013) with tickets now on sale via our website, cruise lines putting forward their nominations for Cruise Consultant and Agency of the Year and submissions also open for Agencies and Networks to put forward their cruise marketing campaigns from 2012 to be recognised.

Cruise3sixty2013 will mark our 4th straight year taking a delegation to this excellent North American event to be held in Vancouver in June 2013.

For the serious cruise travel agents this is a great opportunity to gain some insight into what is happening in the world's largest source market for cruise (USA) through interactive seminars, multiple ship inspections and panel discussions featuring key cruise industry executives.

National Cruise Week Feedback following our inaugural National Cruise Week promotion was very positive and many agents continue to ask when and if we will be doing the same again in 2013.

In case you have missed what has already been announced - YES, we will and it is proposed to again be the 1st week of September.

Good timing to coincide with the start of our local season and strong forward sales for Northern Hemisphere cruising in 2014.

Pandaw adds 'mini Mekong' sectors

Clients can now book Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh, or Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, on the *RV Mekong Pandaw*.

SHORTER Mekong itineraries, of only three or four nights in duration, have been introduced by Pandaw River Expeditions, priced from US\$704 with "very last minute 20% discount" for departures next month.

Available from Dec 2012 through Mar 2013, the program provides an extra option for Australians travelling in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The trips to or from Siem Reap involve a five-hour coach transfer to or from Kampong Cham, while the excursion up the Tonle River to Kampong Chhnang is by either coach or ship depending on water levels.

Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) to Phnom Penh sailings explore the main Mekong channel, with visits to a tribal village, catfish farm and floating markets, and a trishaw ride.

Siem Reap packages include tours of temples,

villages and the Twin Holy Mountains.

Meanwhile, the *Tonle Pandaw* will return to Burma next year to start a weekly rotation cruise out of Mandalay.

Sailing upriver to the Third Defile and then down to Pagan, the route takes in all major sights in addition to lesser-known stops such as the pot-making villages.

"This cruise alleviates the need for any hotels at Mandalay and Pagan, which solves a huge problem for the traveler, and the need to go in and out via Yangon," which has become gridlocked with traffic in recent times, Pandaw said.

The cruise will connect with direct international flights to Mandalay.

In 2013, Air Asia, Bangkok Air, Thai and Silk Air are scheduled to have direct flights to Mandalay from Bangkok and Singapore.

With ten vessels exploring four countries, Pandaw is the largest "luxury" river cruise company in Asia.

Fares include English-speaking guides, crew gratuities, meals, locally made alcoholic beverages soft drinks, tea, coffee and mineral water.

For information, see pandaw.com.

Agents enjoy the first voyage



A GROUP of very lucky agents were hosted onboard *Voyager of the Seas* last Friday night, during the vessel's Sydney one-night cruise to nowhere debut.

Boarding during the early afternoon, agents spent the day exploring the vessel and getting well acquainted with her bountiful buffet.

During the evening, the group sipped on cocktails at an exclusive event in *Voyager's* Studio B bar, before making their way to the Studio B ice-rink for an astrologically themed jaw-dropping ice-skating spectacular.

The agents then enjoyed dinner in the elegant Main Dining room, before they partied the night away with a 11pm magic show, followed by a midnight 70s themed Party in the Promenade.

Pictured above enjoying drinks in Studio B is Trisha Matthews, Julia Leary, Carley Russell and Andy Knighton from Flight Centre Cruise.

Alaska is unleashed in 2013

INNERSEA Discoveries has slashed capacity from 60 to 36 guests for three of its 2013 Alaska voyages onboard *Wilderness Adventurer*.

Titled Alaska Unleashed, the departures are designed for active travellers (who engage in regular weekly physical activities equal to 40km bike rides or 8km runs/hikes) who want all-day adventures.

The sailings will depart 08 Jun, 13 Jul and 10 Aug, and include bushwhacking in Alaskan backcountry, a glacier trek and extended kayaking in ice-filled fjords and wilderness bays.

The voyages will each also be accompanied by a regional expert, with the line-up including award-winning nature photographer and writer Amy Gulick (08 Jun); John and Jan Straley, Alaska residents; John is an author and Jan is a marine biologist (13 Jul); and Alaskan adventurer and author Joe Upton (10 Aug).

"We are heeding the call to offer exclusive departures for those adventure seekers who want to go farther, longer and explore deeper into Alaska's wilderness on multi-sport adventures," said Tim Jacox, executive vp of sales and marketing.

Fares start for the adventures start from US\$5,595pp/ts, see innerseadiscoveries.com.

Crystal opens bookings for 2014/15

Crystal Cruises has released its 2014 worldwide program, as well as a selection of 2015 voyages, to give forward planning guests a holiday head start.

THE release marks the earliest that Crystal Cruises has ever launched its long-term future program to the cruising public.

"It's really quite an exciting time for us," said Diane Patrick, md Wiltrans (GSA for Crystal Cruises in Australia).

"The release is wonderful because it gives travellers time, and if they're only going to do a cruise every couple of years, they've got that information and they can plan accordingly," she added.

Overall the new program will see *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony* sail a grand total of 61 voyages, which will take guests to 194 ports in 68 countries.

Serenity will start 2014 with a 13-day Panama Canal cruise from Miami to Los Angeles on 05 Jan 2013, after which she will embark on an epic 89-day World Voyage from Los Angeles to Southampton (also available in five segments: LA to Yokohama, Yokohama to Hong Kong, Hong Kong to Singapore, Singapore to Cape Town and Cape Town to London).

Highlights of the World Voyage include a return to the West Coast of Africa, which Crystal has not featured in its program for over five years.

Following the completion of her world adventure in Apr 2014, *Serenity* will sail 15 voyages around the Mediterranean and Western Europe, ranging in length between seven- and 12-days, after which she will sail a 14-day Trans-Atlantic itinerary from London to Boston, and then four 10-day Canada and New England voyages and a seven-day Canada cruise.

In Nov *Serenity* will take her leave of Canada and New England with a 14-day US East Coast and Caribbean cruise from New York to Miami, followed by two 11-day Panama Canal voyages between Miami and Caldera.

Serenity will finish 2014 with two Caribbean cruises departing roundtrip from Miami on 11 and 21 Dec.

Meanwhile *Symphony* will start 2014 closer to home, with two 12-day South Pacific voyages; a 12-day Australia and NZ cruise from Auckland to Sydney departing 02 Feb; and a 14-day Australia and Indonesia voyage from Sydney to Bali on 16 Feb.

Between late Feb and Apr *Symphony* will be

positioned in Asia, with a series of Southeastern 14-day itineraries, as well as 10- and 13-day China cruises, and 15- and 12-day China and Japan voyages between Beijing and Tokyo.

In May she will depart Tokyo via a 15-day Trans-Atlantic cruise to LA; followed by a 17-day Panama Canal cruise between LA and New York; and a 12-day transatlantic cruise from New York to the Icelandic city of Reykjavik departing on 01 Jun.

Between Jun and Sep *Symphony* will host Baltic Sea & Russia, Northern Europe, North Cape & Arctic Circle; British Isles and Western Europe itineraries ranging in length from 15- to seven-days; before she heads back to the Pacific for an 11-day NZ cruise from Auckland to Sydney on 13 Nov, a 13-day Sydney to Bali adventure on 24 Nov, a 14-day Bali to Bangkok cruise departing 07 Dec and a 15-day 21 Dec Southeast Asia cruise roundtrip from Bangkok.

MEANWHILE registration is now open for guests interested in Crystal Cruises 2015 World Cruise.

Designed to celebrate Crystal's 20th World Cruise as well as the company's 25th anniversary in 2015, the 108-day voyage will depart Miami on 15 Jan 2015, and will sail below the equator to South America, before cruising to the Pacific, NZ, and Australia, then on to Africa before returning to the Americas.

The commemorative cruise can be broken into six sectors including: a 16-day Miami to Lima South American cruise departing 15 Jan; a 19-day Lima to Auckland voyage departing 31 Jan, taking in Easter Is, Pitcairn Is, Papeete, Bora Bora, Rarotonga and Auckland; and a 21-day Auckland to Perth cruise departing 20 Feb and calling at Tauranga, Napier, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Albany and Perth.

The sectors will also include a 21-day Perth to Cape Town voyage departing 13 Mar; followed by a 15-day Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro cruise on 03 Apr; and will conclude with a 16-day Rio to Miami cruise on 18 Apr.

For full details see www.wiltrans.com.au.

New Sea World cruising

SEA World Cruises is launching a five-hour guided High Life Day Cruise this Dec.

Commencing on 04 Dec, the voyage will cruise past the best islands and homes in the Gold Coast Broadwater, enroute to The Sanctuary Cove Marine Village for shopping and lunch.

The cruise is priced from \$79 per adult and \$59 per child, see seaworldcruises.com.au.

Kids cruise free in Sydney

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is hoping to capture a slice of the family pie, by offering a 'kids cruise free' deal on its Weekend Breakfast cruise, Buffet Lunch cruise, Sydney Harbour Coffee cruise and the Hop On Hop Off Harbour Explorer cruise around Sydney Harbour.

The deal is applicable when children travel with a paying adult, on voyages between now and 31 Mar 2013.

See www.captaincook.com.au.

New Coral coloured website

AGENTS can now access an improved website for all things Coral Princess Cruises, at www.coralprincess.com.au.

"We are excited by the opportunities provided by the new site, and are looking forward to several new initiatives over coming months including the trade/online booking portal which will allow real time bookings and confirmations," said Andrew Castles, sales and marketing manager at Coral Princess Cruises.



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WINE snobs and those that enjoy a tippie or two will appreciate the new online video from Royal Caribbean titled 'Wines of the World: Royal Caribbean Pours from the Best Vineyards'.

To view the clip, **CLICK HERE**.

American history on the Queen

GUESTS sailing the mighty Mississippi River onboard American Cruise Lines (ACL) 150-guest *Queen of the Mississippi* can now expect a whole new dimension of experience in American river cruise history, with the arrival of an antique 132-year-old Nichol steam calliope.

For those that don't know, (**CW** had to look this one up), a calliope is a steam organ which produces sound through the use of steam or compressed air which is pushed through large whistles, and was a popular entertainment piece for people living in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The historic (but fully functioning) Nichol instrument joining the *Queen*, originates from the *Washington*, a paddlewheel steamboat which operated on the Mississippi and Ohio River from 1880 to 1938, and which includes all its original brass whistles and valves, keyboard, recordings and books.

See www.americancruiselines.com.

Royal Princess cabana cost

ENHANCEMENTS to *Royal Princess'* Sanctuary, debuting in Jun 2013, including private cabanas and rock gardens with atmospheric lighting leading to a new central pavilion (**CW** 22 Nov) will come at a cost for guests.

Passengers who wish to make use of *Royal Princess'* Sanctuary will have to shell out US\$15 for a half day, \$25 for a full day, per person; whilst the new private cabanas will cost guests \$80 for half a day; and Retreat Pool's cabana rentals will set them back US\$50.

When she debuts *Royal Princess'* Sanctuary will sport four private Sanctuary Cabanas and two Lotus Spa Cabanas.

Solstice sets sail for Australia

CELEBRITY Cruises visited Malaysia for the first time last week, as part of *Celebrity Solstice's* 12-night voyage from Dubai to Singapore before heading to its new homeport of Sydney.

The ship arrived at Port Klang on Thursday morning and held an official ceremony onboard, with plaque exchanges between Captain Ioannis Berdos and the Secretary General of Ministry of Tourism Malaysia.

From Dec to Mar, *Solstice* will offer cruises out from Sydney, Perth and Auckland with calls at Cairns, Airlie Beach, Brisbane, Melbourne, Milford Sound, Christchurch, Hobart, Adelaide, Albany and more.



DON'T mention the 'T' word!

During a recent ship inspection of the *Celebrity Millennium*, Adam Armstrong commercial manager, Australia & NZ at Royal Caribbean Cruises Australasia, revealed that the ship's Olympic restaurant featured original wood panels taken from the sister ship of the ill fated *Titanic*, *RMS Olympic*.

Rarely mentioned when onboard a ship for obvious reasons, the word *Titanic*, piqued the interest of the crowd, to which Armstrong quipped "But we don't mention the 'T' word whilst onboard".

OCEAN view and a scab or two...

A South African company is releasing a unique beach swimsuit calendar for 2013, perfect for cruisers who want to look at an ocean view all year long, as long as they don't mind zombie women.

The calendar sees the attractive 'zombies' don swimsuits and pose lazily on the white sandy sunny shores of a South African beach, replete with deep blue ocean vistas, rotting flesh and cataracted eyes.

Whilst most fans of the genre have thrown their support behind the calendar, some have however criticised the location of the photoshoot, saying it should have been shot in a post apocalyptic style city not on an idyllic beach.

"Instead of looking like they were victims of a zombie attack, it rather looks like they were all in the same car accident," said one disgruntled fan.




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PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710
Phone: 1300 799 220 Fax: 1300 799 221

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Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper
Editor: Louise Goldsbury
Assistant Editor: Amanda Collins
Contributors: Roderick Eime, Chantel Long and Guy Dundas
Email: info@cruiseweekly.com.au

Cruise Weekly is part of the **CRUISE** 
Travel Daily Group:   

Advertising and Marketing: Christie-Lee Lachance, Lisa Martin and Magda Herdzik
Email: advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au
Business Manager: Jenny Piper
Email: accounts@traveldaily.com.au