CRUISE



Tuesday 23 October 2012

New ship for Norwegian Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line is getting ready to wow guests with its newest concept, a Breakaway Plus ship, due for delivery in 2015.

THE announcement follows the signage of an agreement between the cruise line and the iconic German Meyer Werft shipyard, which will see the latter craft a new 163,000-ton ship under the classification of Breakaway Plus.

Schettino trial begins

AN ITALIAN courtroom packed with 500 people has heard damning evidence against the captain of the doomed *Costa Concordia*, Francesco Schettino, which included blackbox recordings.

The hearing will determine whether the unpopular captain will stand trial for his actions and failures relating to the sinking of the *Concordia*, and will examine the blackbox recordings as well as a 270 page report by experts on the incident.

Schettino, who is currently suing Costa for wrongful dismissal, and his lawyers used the hearing to argue that the captain was not the only crew member to blame in the incident and that his orders were mistaken and not carried out.

Schettino's lawyers also claimed the captain was not manning the bridge when the ship struck the reef, and that instead another crew member was responsible.

Meanwhile the report, penned by experts including two admirals and two engineers, laid the lion's share of the blame for the collision and the poor evacuation on Schettino, and dismissed the captains claim he was not on the bridge, saying he assumed control of the helm six minutes before the disaster.

The experts also noted that crew language barriers and lack of safety training, coupled with not all guests having had attended the ship's safety drills may have also played a part.

According to reports, leaked blackbox recordings also purport to prove that the captain delayed the evacuation, with the revelation that he knew the ship was going down at 9.45pm, but at 9.54pm told an officer to inform guests that the ship had just suffered a blackout.

Speaking about the move Kevin Sheehan, Norwegian Cruise Line's Chief Executive Officer said "Norwegian Breakaway and Norwegian Getaway [the company's Breakaway class vessels also currently under construction at Meyer Werft] have garnered significant attention in the marketplace with their innovative design, rich stateroom mix and world-class amenities".

"Building on that momentum, along with Meyer Werft's expertise and efficiency in the design and construction process, we are extending the excitement and anticipation with a new, larger edition Breakaway Plus class ship to further distinguish the Norwegian brand," he added.

The new, as yet un-named vessel will boast accommodations for 4,200 passengers, and according to the cruise line, will incorporate many of the company's Breakaway class ships' unique design elements and innovations.

"This new order further solidifies our commitment to continued innovation in terms of the guest experience and will incorporate technical and environmental advances as well," said Sheehan.

The newly inked agreement between NCL and Meyer Werft will see the new Breakaway Plus vessel delivered in October 2015, with the option for a second Breakaway Plus ship for delivery in the Northern Hemisphere spring of 2017.

Texas cruise boom

THE Port of Galveston in Texas has celebrated a milestone, receiving its 5 millionth visitor last month.

HAL ups its Canadian presence

HOLLAND America Line is strengthening its ties with the Canadian province Quebec, signing an agreement which will see the cruise company increase its presence in St Lawrence.

According to reports, the cruise line has pledged to add at least eight embarkation/ disembarkation operations onboard *Veendam* during each Northern Hemisphere summer season for three consecutive years, commencing in 2013.

The company has also agreed to boost *Maasdam's* embarkation/disembarkation operations in the Port of Montreal.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

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

PLUS see p5 for a full page from Oceania
Cruises detailing three of its Alaskan cruise offerings, and see p6 for warm weather cruise deals from CruiseSelect.

Smell the roses with Crystal

CRYSTAL Cruises is enticing the senses of cruisers with a new Garden & Floral Designthemed voyage sailing from Barcelona to Venice on 21 April 2013.

Titled 'La Dolce Vita' the voyage offers guests over 15 Crystal Adventures visiting some of the world's most iconic, romantic, and private gardens which bloom across the Catalan coast and French and Italian Rivieras.

To emerse guests in the experience, Crystal has enlisted the help of Britian's celebrity floral designer, Paula Pryke, and Sybil Sylvester, founder of flower "creative think tank," Wildflower Designs, to offer hands-on workshops and presentations in floral design, arrangement, and other floral-related topics.

Sail a Silversea in Alaska

2013 will see *Silver Shadow* embark on 15 sailings departing from Anchorage, Vancouver and Seward between May and September.

Itineraries featured in the Alaskan season include a seven-day sailing between Seward and Vancouver, cruising the Inside Passage and visiting the Alaskan ports of Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway and Sitka, as well as Tracy Arm Fjord and Sawyer Glacier.

Shadow will also embark on an 11-day round-trip voyage from Vancouver, taking in Wrangell and the Canadian ports of Prince Rupert and Victoria on Vancouver Island.

Fares start from \$3,549pp twin share for the seven day sailings.

Tall ships return to Sydney

NEXT year, for the first time in a quarter of a century Sydneysiders will be able to bear witness to seventeen tall ships on the water, in an event to mark the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy's first entry into Sydney Harbour.

The event will see the 17-strong tall ship fleet gather in Melbourne on 03 October 2013 and sail to Hobart and Sydney before a tall ship race to Auckland, New Zealand.







Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY

Pacific JewelTue 23 OctRhapsody of the SeasTue 23 OctDawn PrincessWed 24 OctOosterdamWed 24 OctPacific PearlSat 27 OctCarnival SpiritSun 28 Oct

BRISBANE

VolendamTue 23 OctSun PrincessWed 24 OctPacific DawnSat 27 Oct

FREMANTLE

Radiance of the Seas Sat 28 Oct

Costa cruise winner

CRUISE Weekly would like to congratulate Brian Loughton, the lucky winner of **CW's** Costa Cruises competition.

Brian can now look forward to a fantastic seven-night *Costa Victoria* cruise for two taking in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Get your game on!

CELEBRITY Cruises is reinventing the traditional cruise Card Room, putting a modern twist on the theme with its Game On room onboard *Celebrity Reflection*.

Described by the company as a whimsical, warm and inviting space, the Game On room showcases an old-meets-new aesthetic with an eclectic collection of clocks adorning the walls and a distinct color palette.

The room boasts two standard card tables, an assortment of board games, and a new interactive gaming experience with six new, touchscreen display tables which allow guests to play eight different digital games for up to four players.

"Game On's custom-designed games promote healthy brain function while encouraging guests to challenge themselves and others by tapping into their memory, attention and creative skills," Celebrity said in a statement.

"Certain games also have the capability to interact with other tables, engaging participants in competitive play for honors of highest scores," the cruise line added.

Christchurch defers 2013/14 cruises

The Port of Christchurch has deferred the start of a new cruise terminal development, which it announced in 2010, meaning the port will not take bookings for the majority of cruise vessels for the 2013/14 season.

THE \$13.7m plans were thrown into chaos in the aftermath of the February 2011 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks which ravaged the city of Christchurch.

A review in the wake of the quake has meant that the Port has had to revise its development plans to take into account the seismic activity, meaning the development costs are likely to increase by around 40% to approximately \$20 million dollars.

"Given the complex nature and the limited timeframe it will be challenging to meet the opening of the 2013/2014 cruise season," said the Port's Chief Executive, Peter Davie.

"When we do the cruise birth development

RCCL tickles the tastebuds

FANS of food will be excited to learn of Royal Caribbean's plans to introduce a range of culinary enhancements across its fleet.

These "culinary enhancements" will include a revamp of the main dining room menu to include a greater variety of choice, more international food options (with a focus on authenticity), and for dessert lovers new "hot from the oven" blueberry peach crumble, sticky bread and butter pudding and sumptuous carrot cake.

In addition, favourites such as the aged handcut Manhattan steak, escargot bourguignonne, shrimp cocktail and crème brulee will now be available every night; whilst the company will also introduce more heart-healthy, gluten-free and lactose-free food options.

Other enhancements will see low calorie, gluten-free and lactose-free options clearly identified with respective menu icons, as well as the addition of menu selections that can be modified to fit these requirements for guests.

Guests will also enjoy new main dining menu offerings including upgraded entrees such as rack of lamb, surf & turf, beef sliders and daily entrée dinner salads; whilst the cruise line is also investing in a new wait staff training targeting the new menus, standards training, and allergen and dietary programs.

we will need to take into account infrastructure such as roads and parking for coaches, to provide customers with an experience that is up to international standard.

"LPC is simply not prepared to take short cuts on or risks with the design and construction given what we now know about seismic activity in this region and impact on physical structures," he added, saying "We have to do it right first time around".

In terms of a replacement, the port of Akaroa, about 90 minutes by road from Christchurch, will host the majority of vessels for the 2013/14 season, whilst Lyttleton will host some smaller cruise ships which can fit into the inner harbour.

Darwin starts bumper season

THE Port of Darwin has celebrated the beginning of its summer cruise period, saying with its 2012-13 line up of 63 port bookings it is expecting "bumper season".

Darwin's season kicked-off last week with a visit from *Radiance of the Seas*, which sailed carrying 2,100 passengers and 900 crew.

"Operators of organised tours, food and beverage outlets, retailers, taxis and many other businesses will benefit from spending by passengers and crew," said Darwin's Minister for Business Peter Chandler.

"For the first time several ships will stay overnight .

"On Boxing Day two ships will be in port on the day," Chandler 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:

Six-night Melbourne Cup roundtrip onboard Pacific Pearl

- From: \$1,039pp (Inside Cabin)
- Departs: 03 November 2012
- Visits: Sydney and Melbourne (with two overnight stays)
- **Includes:** six-nights cruising, entry to the Melbourne cup, and onboard meals.
- Contact: ecruising.travel



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Northern lights special fares

IF you have ever wished to see the famed Northern Lights (aurora borealis) now's the time, with the natural phenomenon enjoying its 14 year peak, and Hurtigruten offering special fares to take advantage of the boon.

The special Northern Lights fares are available on selected itinerary departures between January and March 2013, including the 12-day Classic Round voyage (from \$1,801), 11-day Classic Norwegian Discovery (from \$1,728), seven-day

Classic Voyage North (from \$1,264), and sixday Classic Voyage South (from \$1,157).

For more info see vour travel agent, or call 1800 623 267.



Orion gives guests extra

FOR a limited time Orion Expedition Cruises is offering a free charter flight to or from Orion from Cairns or Rabul, with its 06 March 2013 Melanesian Discovery, 27 March 2013 PNG Cultural Highlights, and 07 April 2013 West Papua and Maluku cruises - call 1300 361 012.

Time ending for free flights

SCENIC Tours is reminding cruisers that they only have until 30 November 2012 to score free flights to Europe on selected 2013 Europe River Cruises and Tours.

Prices on the 15 Day Romantic Rhine & Moselle River Cruise start from \$7,095pp twin share including flights with taxes and the 15 day cruise. See your travel agent for details.



Port Review: Juneau, Alaska by Cruise Sales Manager, Roger Condon

As we head into our Aussie summer, many of us are planning our 2013 holiday escape. After 14 years at sea I am often asked "where is my favourite world destination?" It's a difficult question to answer as there are too many wonderful places. The Mediterranean, East and South Africa, Vietnam...but I have no hesitation in listing Alaska as one of my favourite places.

When travelling to the USA to visit Mickey, consider heading up to Alaska. Yes, it can be misty and cold at times, but when the sun shines bright here, you'd be hard pressed to find a more spectacular destination. Sea Eagles fly above you, brown bears fish for salmon, and hopefully you'll see humpbacks, orcas and sea otters. It also offers some of the best adventure options of any cruising area, so why do people wait till their older to head up here?

Juneau is Alaska's state capital, accessible by land and sea only as there's no road access. Your cruise ship docks right in the centre of town and once you step off the gangway you'll be able to shop for all things Alaskan. Some gaudy as you'd expect, but also native art that is beguilingly beautiful, and cafes, bars and restaurants. It's all easy, level walking, so even if you have a few mobility challenges, you'll be able to explore Juneau downtown.

Sightseeing options are numerous. Independently, you can take the Glacier Bus to Mendenhall Glacier and Visitors Centre, the city's drive-up glacier, or hop on the Mount Roberts Tramway to be whisked high above Juneau for great views, an insight into native culture and return on foot via the many rainforest trails where you might encounter a brown bear. There are reminders of Juneau's gold rush origins, and frontier experiences like the Red Dog Saloon with its sawdust floor.

Unforgettable highlights include river rafting, salmon hatchery tours, hiking, biking and zipline adventures, whale watching and panning for gold, however, for a once in a lifetime experience, splurge and take one of the helicopter glacier tours, where you can step out on the ice, or for real adventure don a pair of crampons and go ice-climbing. Alaska – truly incredible!

Roger's Quick Tips

Best Months: May - September

Don't Miss: Glacier helicopter flightseeing

Tour or Not: At least half-day tour, half-day on your own in town

Sightseeing: Helicopter abd glacier dog sledding Food: Alaskan halibut and of course salmon

Language: English

Shopping: Everywhere you turn Cash or Card: Credit Card or USD



luneau



A lot of dogs like a good swim, and if near a beach will do their utmost to run into the ocean and bark at the waves.

But for one shih tzu, Bam Bam, the ocean became a frightening place very quickly, after he got stuck on a rock surrounded by quickly rising water near Herne Bay in

Fortunately for the soaking wet pup, a paddleboarder, Charlie Head saw his plight and waded out into the waves to save him, capturing the rescue on a camera.

"He definitely needs a rescue - in about 10 minutes he'll be completely covered in water," Head said.

Bam Bam's owners have not yet been located, however Head has said that if he can, he will adopt the little fish-out-of-water.

Regent unveils winter delights

REGENT Seven Seas will expand its horizons with three new ports and five Grand voyages during its Northern Hemisphere winter season, between November 2013 and May 2014.

Released this month, the new program will feature voyages to South America, Asia, the South Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Alaska.

Highlights of the season include Seven Seas Voyager visits to Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, Vietnam, China, Japan and India between November 2013 and June 2014, as well as a return to South America for Seven Seas Mariner, with a range of sailings from 10to 70-nights including the coveted "Circle South America" Grand Voyage.

To celebrate the launch, the company is offering special two-for-one fares and bonus savings of up to US\$15,000 per suite for bookings made by 31 December 2012.

As an added carrot, the cruise line will also provide a complimentary one-night, postcruise luxury hotel package on all 2013-2014 Winter Collection itineraries booked this year by 31 December.

For full program details, or to make a booking, see your local travel agent, or visit www.wiltrans.com.au.



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CRUISE



Getting into 'Carnivore' Spirit

by: Roderick Eime

The arrival of Carnival Spirit into Sydney has set the city abuzz and media is all a-twitter about the largest ship ever to home port in Australia.

This middle-aged writer joined hundreds of excited young travel agents and a number of media for a one night sampler cruise last Friday and it was clear from the outset, it was going to be party time.

We've heard all about the "Aussification" (pro's and con's) and Green Thunder, but what about some of the less obvious aspects of this massive vessel?

I seldom cruise on the large ships and even less frequently with Mrs Travel Reporter (a big ship debutante) in company, so it was an enlightening experience in many respects. One of the most anticipated events was dining in the newly re-christened Nouveau Restaurant, otherwise known as Supper Club or Steakhouse throughout the Carnival family. This is the bookings-essential, \$35surcharge, fine dining, vegetarian-free experience way up on Deck 10 and accessible via a breathtaking, transparent staircase from the deck below.

Guests are greeted by immaculately coiffed and attired hostesses and seated at all correct, silver service tables, so I'm glad I ironed my shirt and brought a tie. Dress up for this occasion, it won't hurt. Dress code: Cruise Elegant.

While the menu remains consistent with other Carnival vessels, the wine list has certainly been tweeked for local (read: parochial) tastes with the addition of AU and NZ reds and whites.

"The Australian and NZ wines are the first to sell out," laments the sommelier, "no-one seems interested in the French or Californian wines."

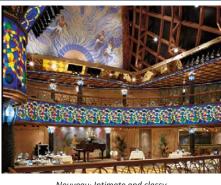
Maybe because most Aussies know nothing about foreign wines and are a bit nervous to venture outside our comfort zone. Talking about 'comfort zone', bring on the steaks!

Our waiter manoeuvres a weighty trolley up to our table, full of prime cuts and proceeds to recite a carnivore's anthem. I listen politely and then declare cowardly "Let chef decide. Whatever he'd cook for himself." Madame rolls her eyes. She's heard this before, but with such a daunting array, it's a timid strategy of mine that never fails. An Ahi tuna tartare with Houghton's Wisdom Sav Blanc to begin, followed by the [drum roll please] 500g spice-rubbed, prime rib eye with pepper sauce. Medium rare, of course. Good call chef. Mme chooses the petit 250g filet mignon with lobster tail. "Perfect". A Rufus Stone Shiraz chases it down. It turns out to be one of the best steaks I've ever had, perfectly cooked, ideally seasoned. My only wince was it came on a cold plate, although every other plate on the table was piping hot. Desserts are to die for. Chocolate 'sampler' be damned, it's a dish for two.

Thinking this must be several cuts above the regular dining experience, I am able to consult cruise veteran, John Pond [www.johnpond.com], who just sailed in with Spirit from Hawaii.

"I can tell you," John declares with some authority, "the meals downstairs are none too shabby either, particularly the prime rib and roast duck, plus the thin crust pizza (on the buffet deck) is always fun at midnight."

Takeaways: Choose 'anytime dining' before you board, try room service (small charge) and you MUST do Nouveau at least once. Book early at: www.carnival.com.au.



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