



Repeats driving Avalon expansion

Avalon Waterways' decision to expand further into South America comes in response to booming repeat client rates.

GLOBUS Family of Brands Australasian marketing manager Christian Schweitzer told *Cruise Weekly* that Avalon Waterways was seeing "extraordinarily high" repeat client rates in talking about why the company had released a new itinerary cruising the Peruvian Amazon.

"Depending on which year you look at the statistics, [the repeat rate] is anywhere between 90% and 95% will repeat again - it's just a question of time".

"We're finding that the more exotic locations are the ones typically that get the repeat client in, so we've found that with the Mekong, that ship, with 16 cabins and a capacity of 32

people, sells out," Schweitzer added.

Although Avalon already operated cruises around the Galapagos Islands, he said the new Amazon cruise product marked the first time the company had expanded into the mainland part of South America.

"If we use the Galapagos as a gauge for what demand will be like, we're not going to get the volume as what we get with Europe, but we will certainly get enough to warrant an expansion of the program in years to come," he added.

Avalon's debut operating on the Peruvian part of the Amazon River will come in the form of an 11-night itinerary, with three nights spent aboard the *MV Aria* venturing deep into the jungle, searching for rare wildlife and visiting indigenous villages and the secluded Pacaya Samiria Reserve accompanied by a naturalist.

Avalon has secured 10 out of the 16 cabins on the *Aria* for exclusive selling through the season.

Earlybird savings of up to \$300 are available on the 11-night Inca Empire to the Peruvian Amazon, priced from \$6,099ppts if booked by 30 Sep, unless sold out beforehand.

The growth of niche cruising

CALLS from clients for more themed cruises has resulted in Avalon Waterways responding with a larger selection on European sailings.

Niche interest cruises available in the 2014 product range include wine, art, food and Jewish heritage, with new options available include sailings focused on health and wellness, beer tasting, golf and World War One history.

"That has an appeal not just to the FIT traveller but then also to groups and the MICE market," Schweitzer told *CW*.

Avalon expands Europe again

BACK in Europe, the company is preparing for a significant expansion of its core product with three new ships set to hit the seas in 2014 in the forms of the *Avalon Impression*, *Avalon Poetry II* and the *Avalon Illumination*.

Each vessel will form part of an expanded lineup of Suite Ships, now numbering eight & more than half of its total European contingent

All up, Avalon will offer 26 itineraries in Europe, with a further 12 available worldwide on the Nile, Mississippi, Mekong, Yangtze, Amazon and around the Galapagos Islands.

Jammed with cruise news

Today's trade issue of *CW* features 4 pages.



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Silversea overnight stays to stay

The trend for extended visits to popular ports is set to increase, especially on luxury cruise lines.

SILVERSEA is one of several lines that has promoted the value of docking overnight in major destinations, which also enables passengers to take two-day road trips to other cities.

Steve Odell, president Europe & Asia-Pacific

for Silversea, told *Cruise Weekly* on a Vietnam cruise this week that the company had increased the number of overnights and late departures.

"This allows our guests the benefit of longer and more varied excursions," he said.

"In this case, Ha Long Bay allows us to offer an overnight in Hanoi, which is a four-hour drive away.

"In Ho Chi Minh City, we can offer a number of different excursions each day."

In Europe, the line also offers three-day tours in St Petersburg, Russia, allowing time to visit the city and the Summer Palace.

"We even can offer the high-speed train to Moscow with an overnight," Odell said.

Although the older clientele are more likely to stay on the ship, many guests like to take advantage of the opportunity to dine ashore "so we do that in the hallmark ports", he said.

In Europe, Silversea's most popular tours are for St Petersburg, while in Asia, it is the overnight tours to Siem Reap from Ho Chi Minh City and Bangkok.

According to Odell, overnight stays are more than a passing trend.

"I believe we will look at increasing overnights and late stays in port – the luxury customer demands more time to do more things."

He said the all-inclusive model means that Silversea is not focused on driving onboard revenue like the big cruise lines in the premium and mass market.

"For them, having the guests on board is important to drive revenue.

"It's not the same for us with an all-inclusive tariff," Odell said.

USD sales for Hapag-Lloyd

AUSTRALIAN & NZ agents can now sell Hapag-Lloyd cruise-only fares in fixed US dollars. A fixed exchange rate of US\$1.20 to €1.00 is being used and is valid for new bookings on the *MS Europa*, *MS Hanseatic*, *MS Bremen* and *MS Europa 2* up to Spring 2015, with more information at www.hl-cruises.com.

Seabourn Academy into Aus

LUXURY liner Seabourn has launched its online training course to Australian agents.

The Seabourn Academy is a free program aimed at boosting sales, with tips and sales techniques delivered by top-sellers worldwide.

The full Academy consists of six modules, each containing between four & seven lessons, with successful graduates qualifying for five CLIA Australasia accreditation points and a bonus \$100 commission on their first booking made within 60 days of course completion.

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Brett Jardine - General Manager



Cruise News
& Views...

Cruise Ship New Builds

AS OF today, there are 20 new cruise ships on order to be built in ship-yards around the world over the next four years.

These twenty ships will deliver over 60,000 additional berths, a significant increase in capacity (subject to the possible scrapping of older vessels over this period).

On a global basis, the average cruise length is 7 days, (from Australasia it is 10 days) so 60,000 extra berths will cater for approximately three million more passengers globally.

Great news for the consumer, giving them more choice and great news for retail agents that are focused on the upside in having cruise as a strong part of their business mix.

One of these twenty new builds mentioned above is being launched this month in New York – *Norwegian Breakaway*.

Dubbed as “New York’s” ship, *Breakaway* will encompass a lot of what New York is about including the Rockettes, Broadway shows, hot dog carts on deck and an open-to-the-ocean boardwalk lined with shops, restaurants & bars.

As will be revealed at our annual statistics launch on 29 April, the Americas have certainly grown in appeal of recent years and a major contributing factor has been the development of some extraordinary new hardware such as *Oasis* and *Allure of the Seas* (based in Fort Lauderdale for Caribbean cruising).

No doubt the excitement around *Norwegian Breakaway*’s launch will add to our tally of Aussie’s and Kiwi’s heading across the Pacific

And if not now, then in early in 2014 when her sister is launched – *Norwegian Getaway*!

ECruising partners Cruise Hols

CRUISE Holidays Australia has aligned itself with online cruise and touring company [ECruising.travel](#) to help sell its expedition series of land/sea combination itineraries.

Managing director of Cruise Holidays Australia, Les Farrar, said the combination tour and cruise itineraries would appeal to his client base of well-travelled people who are always on the lookout for something new.

Brett Dudley’s [ECruising.travel](#) business will see its products benefit from Cruise Holidays’ layered marketing approach and website listing.

NCL splits off CruiseCompete

NORWEGIAN Cruise Lines has removed its products and representation from the CruiseCompete lead generation platform.

CruiseCompete.com works as a consumer website where travel agents bid for business based on customer interest in a product.

The cruise company has asked agents not to use its products in order to win business, a move that has been widely praised by agents.

Princess repositions vessels

TWO of Princess Cruises’ vessels will be relocated to Alaska from Europe for the 2014 Northern Summer season, reducing the fleet number in the region from seven to five.

Pacific Princess will reduce frequencies of its Holy Land Turkey, Israel & Egypt itinerary as a result of the relocation.

The much larger *Crown Princess* will also relocate to serve the Alaskan market, with the moves also coming due to the upcoming debut of the *Royal Princess* and then *Regal Princess* a year later, which will both sail European waters.

MEANWHILE, Princess will also ramp up its Asian deployment, basing *Sapphire Princess* out of Singapore for four months next year.



SOMEBODY has watched “Up” too often.

A South African man has completed a daring flight over the shark-infested waters off the coast of Cape Town from the nearby Robben Island, in a chair connected to more than 160 helium balloons.

The effort was to raise money for the Nelson Mandela Children’s Hospital, but the flight didn’t quite go to plan in parts.

Wearing a wetsuit and armed with an air-rifle which was to be used to pop the balloons when it came time to land, the man said the pellets he was firing out of the gun were bouncing off, forcing him to use his backup spear to bring him back to earth.

“Wow, that was crazy,” the man said after his flight, adding “don’t try this at home”.

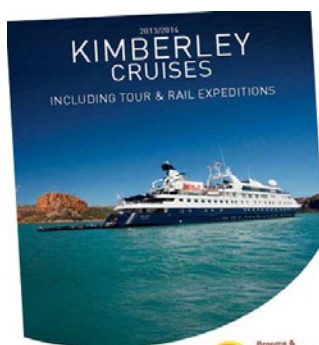
New Uniworld French port

BORDEAUX has been added to the Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, unveiled as part of the release yesterday of the river cruise company’s 2014 preview brochure.

“The region is a wine-lovers paradise and foodies will enjoy local delicacies such as duck confit and oysters - the scenery is breathtaking, Uniworld Australia gm John Molinaro said.

Additionally, all European itineraries, except for Russia now offer all-inclusive pricing, seeing all shore excursions, airport transfers, onboard and offshore gratuities, and much more all becoming part of the paid cruise fare.

The brochure launch also sees savings of up to \$2400 per couple available for bookings made and paid in full before 31 Jul.



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Sydney's Princesses line up for next christening role

NEWS this week that Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton will serve as Godmother to the newest Princess Cruises liner, appropriately titled *Royal Princess*, has the team at Princess' Sydney office in a flutter and donning their crowns and tiaras in anticipation.

Official naming ceremonies for the liner will occur in Southampton on 13 Jun and will kick off a week of celebrations as the newest Princess sails off on her maiden voyage.

A performance of the Royal Marines Band and the pipers of the Irish Guards are also scheduled for the official ceremonies.

With room for 3,600 passengers, *Royal Princess* will be the first of Princess' new generation ships, featuring an expanded Atrium, an overwater Sea-Walk, and a glass-bottomed walkway extending 28-feet over the edge of the ship and even an onboard television studio.

Pictured right is a very regal looking Meg Koffel, Su Cheang, Stephanie Quig and Katie Brown at the Princess Cruises Sydney office, celebrating Middleton's naming of their new ship.



Aurora to adopt polar bears

PASSENGERS on Aurora Expeditions' 2014 season of Arctic voyages visiting Spitsbergen and Greenland will have a polar bear 'adopted' on their behalf by the cruise company.

The initiative will see Aurora contribute to the World Wildlife Fund's adoption program, in which it works to maintain a healthy living environment for the endangered animals.

Each passenger on Aurora's five voyages will receive a certificate outlining their 'adoption' as well as regular updates on WWF's progress and how their donations are being spent.

Cruise pax reciprocity fee

AUSTRALIAN tourists entering Argentina via cruise ships will be exempt from paying a new US\$100 "reciprocity fee", until 30 Jun, according to an update issued by DFAT's Smartraveller travel advice portal.

The fee is valid for re-entry into the country for a year, and from 01 Jul must be paid on the Argentine Migration website prior to arrival.

New river ship into Myanmar

AMAWATERWAYS will introduce a new ship onto Myanmar's Irrawaddy River in autumn next year, tentatively named *AmaPura*.

The small-ship, with a capacity of 76 pax, will be built in conjunction with Ayavata Cruises, a local shipping company based in Myanmar who already own and operate three vessels on the Irrawaddy River.

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