

Another record year for cruising

The Australian cruise industry recorded yet another year of double digit growth in 2012, and is well on track to outstrip a target of 1 million passengers by 2020.

CRUISE Lines International Association yesterday released its passenger statistics for last year (**CW** breaking news) which showed that almost 700,000 of us took to the waves, a year-on-year increase of 11%.

That's a figure that has more than doubled since 2008, with the sector showing an average annual growth rate of 20% over the past decade, "a remarkable result for any industry," according to CLIA Australasia chairman, Gavin Smith.

The 2012 Australian Cruise Industry Report also showed that the local industry now has the second highest population penetration rate in the world, with the equivalent of 3% of the population taking a cruise last year - just behind the long-established North American cruise market at 3.3%.

"Clearly Australians are responding to the growing number of cruise holidays on offer from Australian ports, as well as our strong dollar, which is encouraging more people to cruise overseas," Smith said.

"There's also an increasing awareness among Australian holidaymakers about the tremendous value of cruising and the wide range of cruise holidays available, from relaxing river cruises to fun family breaks and adventurous expedition voyages," he added.

For the first time, the 2012 statistics broke down the figures by passenger age, showing

that about a third of cruisers were aged over 61 years last year.

Almost half were less than 50 and a quarter were aged less than 40.

The most popular destination for Australian passengers was the South Pacific, accounting for 252,555 passengers or 36.5% of the total.

The fastest growing cruise destination was the Caribbean, up 36% to 17,316 Australian passengers, while collectively US destinations (including Alaska) accounted for 8.3% of the market or 57,396 passengers overall.

More than 76,000 Australians opted for a short break cruise of 1-4 days, an increase of 38% on the previous year reflecting the increasing availability of these itineraries.

NSW provided the lion's share of cruisers at 43% of the total, while Queensland accounted for 22%, Victoria 16% and Western Australia 9% - and interestingly on a per capita basis the ACT had the highest population penetration rate, with 5.5% of residents cruising.

International passengers on roundtrip cruises from Australia as well as trans-Tasman and trans-Pacific voyages accounted for 16% of the total, or around 100,000.

And river cruising numbers also continued to expand, with 12% more passengers (a total of 39,275) taking a river cruise last year.

Scenic to unveil newest Gem

AN EIGHTH Scenic 'Space Ship' has been confirmed by Scenic Tours, with the new vessel set to join the fleet next year.

The *Scenic Gem* will be custom built for operation on the Seine River in Northern France, with a special design and technology enabling the ship to reach new ports, such as Honfleur, which has previously been difficult to access due to tidal and certification issues, according to Scenic Tours md Glen Moroney.

"Much of the history of Honfleur is founded upon the sea so the ability to sail into its port is a huge plus for our guests and they can continue to indulge in the Scenic Tours signature of all-inclusive luxury.

"We will be the only operator to offer this customised cruising itinerary," Moroney added.

Gem will be slightly smaller, with capacity for 126 guests, but will maintain the same dimensions, increasing the amount of space per guest.

Itineraries operated by *Scenic Gem* will be round-trip from Paris, offering stops including Normandy beaches & the Somme Battlefields.

SeaLink invests in expansion

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises parent firm SeaLink Travel Group has unveiled an \$11m investment program which will see a new Sydney Harbour vessel constructed and a Harbour mainstay revitalised and upgraded.

Soon to begin construction in Tasmania, a new \$3m multi-purpose Rocket vessel will be deployed on Sydney Harbour in Oct this year, operating on the company's daily hop-on-hop-off harbour service, which will allow the expansion of the trip to inlets around Manly.

Boats currently operating the service are unable to access this part of the harbour due to higher swells experienced at harbour entry.

The new Rocket, which will have a capacity of 200 guests, will also operate whale watching cruises, beginning from next season, with tickets not currently on sale.

Captain Cook Cruises' *Sydney 2000* vessel will receive a major modernisation, with \$1m to be invested in an interior refurbishment which will see new carpets laid and engines replaced to make them more fuel-efficient.

Sydney 2000 will enter drydock for the refurbishments to be carried out from next month, with the project lasting five weeks.

Further investments will be made outside of Sydney, with construction of a \$4m eco-friendly terminal underway on Kangaroo Island off the coast of Adelaide, due for completion in time for the coming Christmas peak season.

The new terminal will include only the second elevator in operation on the island, visitor information services, wine and local produce, with passengers accessing ferries via a covered over-water air-bridge.

SeaLink will pour a \$1.3m investment into its operations and facilities in North Queensland, consisting of a \$1m upgrade of the *MV Reef Cat*, a \$200k contribution towards the upgrade of floating pontoons on Palm Island and a \$100k investment for the upgrade of the Breakwater Terminal in Townsville.

More Triumph port dramas

AN EXPLOSION on two nearby fuel barges forced the temporary evacuation of the infamous *Carnival Triumph* as repairs continued on the ship in Mobile, Alabama.

Although unrelated to the ship itself, workers were told to leave the ship immediately due to the fire, which left three mechanics closer to the incident with critical burns, reports said.

Work on preparing the *Triumph* continues in the Alabama port, with the vessel on track to resume service on 13 Jun.



Cruise Calendar

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

BRISBANE
Pacific Dawn Tue 30 Apr

DARWIN
Oceanic Discoverer Thu 02 May

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Lindblad to maintain Orion luxury

Company founder Sven Lindblad is keen to keep Australians cruising on the enhanced expedition ship, *National Geographic Orion*.

THE renamed *Orion*, recently acquired by US-based Lindblad Expeditions, has no intention of lowering its standards in service, food or accommodation, according to the line's president and founder, Sven Lindblad.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* from his New York office, he said the plan to focus on diving and snorkelling would not detract from the existing onboard luxuries.

"We have had a huge respect for the Orion enterprise and ship for many years so we don't want to take anything away from it – we want to add to it," he said.

"There will be more activities and more expedition staff to give people with different interests as many options as possible, but it won't be at the expense of other things."

Lindblad emphasised his desire to "keep Australians happy" so they continue to maintain their loyalty to the ship.

"We're not coming down from the United States to slash and burn," he said.

"It would be stupid for us to alienate the people who have enjoyed *Orion*."

He said Lindblad Expeditions was committed to maintaining the company and infrastructure of Orion Expedition Cruises, including the Sydney sales office.

Australians would also have greater access

to Lindblad's other 10 vessels: the National Geographic fleet (*Explorer, Endeavour, Islander, Sea Bird* and *Sea Lion*) as well as *Delfin II, Jahan, Lord of the Glens, Oceanic Discoverer* and *Sea Cloud*.

"We already have a lot of Australians travelling with us but I'd like to see more, because they're such great travellers, so we'll be making a big effort over the next year," Lindblad said.

"I think it will be successful because all of the areas that Orion is currently going to, we pioneered in the 60s and 70s, so we know them very well.

"I do believe we do expeditions better than anyone else."

His father, Lars-Eric Lindblad, was the first travel company owner to take travellers to Antarctica and Galápagos, in 1966 and 1967, respectively.

See www.expeditions.com for further details.

Summer season sets for 2012

RHAPSODY of the *Seas's* departure from Sydney last week wrapped up a record-breaking 2012-13 "wave season".

The Royal Caribbean liner won't be back in local waters until 5 October, but that's earlier than its usual summer return.

Last year, *Rhapsody* kicked off Australia's summer schedule on 14 Oct and in 2011 it arrived 27 Oct.

For the next five months, the only options for ocean cruising in Australia are P&O's three ships, Princess Cruises' *Dawn Princess* and Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Spirit*.

Up north, Kimberley river cruises will soon get underway, from May to September on various yachts and small ships.

Captain Cook Cruises is also operating three, four and seven night Murray River cruises in NSW/Victoria aboard the *PS Murray Princess*.

The next big event down south is the 20 May departure of Princess Cruises' *Sea Princess*, which embarks on a 104-day world voyage, round-trip from Sydney's White Bay terminal.

On 2 September, *Sea Princess* then departs on another Sydney round-trip cruise via Tonga, Western Samoa, Hawaii, Tahiti, American Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia.

On the west coast, the upcoming 2013-14 summer season will see the home-porting of Cruise & Maritime Voyages' *Astor* from December, with the ship soon to operate a relocation voyage from its home port in Rome to Fremantle ahead of its local debut.



THERE'S no doubt about those Kiwis.

A keen gardener from the South Island region of Canterbury has outlined his aspirations to grow a pumpkin big enough to turn into a boat.

Steve Dasler first started growing pumpkins as a hobby last year, and one of his first efforts weighed a whopping 118kg.

He was inspired to go even bigger, and is working on a monster pumpkin, with the key being frequent watering and "deadheading" other pumpkins on the vine so it puts all its efforts into the big one.

Once it's big enough he plans to take the top off, put a frame around it and add an outboard motor.

Dasler has challenged other vegetable growers to meet him on the waves in their creations, with a proposed ocean going vegetable race.

FANS of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies can live the dream with the purchase of a real-life pirate ship.

It's a converted 1988 Gibson houseboat, which has been modified to "look like a Hollywood set," and is up for sale for US\$79,000 on the Craigslist website.

Currently located in St Louis, Missouri, the vessel is claimed to be "an AWESOME party boat" with capacity for 30 people, despite only having two bedrooms.



New Magic water features

DISNEY Magic will later this year undergo the biggest refurbishment in its history, with plans to renovate its onboard water park to make many of the offerings "less age specific".

One of the new rides to be installed, to be known as "AquaDunk", involves riders stepping inside a closed chamber before the floor drops away and riders travel through an enclosed tube, over the ocean, before returning to the pool - a drop of some 40-feet.

Renovations will take into account market research indicating families cruising on Disney vessels prefer to stay together while onboard.

The vessel will operate in the Mediterranean for the northern summer before entering drydock, following which it will operate from Miami, replacing the *Disney Wonder*.

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140 happy returns for Holland America

IT WASN'T easy, but Holland America Line managed to fit, light and blow out 140 candles on 18 April in celebration of the line's 140th birthday.

Customers however were the ones receiving the presents through a number of special offers released on a range of cruise products in a multitude of regions around the world.

What began as a single ship in 1873 grew to six over the first 25 years of its operation, with the company operating cargo and passenger voyages, mainly between Europe and America, coining the Holland America line name.

Business grew from the first passenger voyage in 1895, and with its foundation cargo



operations being sold in 1973, the line's core business of luxury passenger cruising has seen new heights reached, now operating 15 ships across seven continents and carrying nearly 800,000 passengers per year.

Holland America's Sydney-based cruise team are **pictured** above celebrating with flags and sailing memorabilia earlier this month.

Gold October for wine lovers

SEA Cloud Cruises has opened sales for an exclusive 'wine lovers' cruise along the Rhine aboard the 88-passenger *River Cloud II*.

Departing from the German town of Trier on 27 October, the voyage will travel along the Rhine and Moselle rivers, arriving into Basel in Switzerland on 03 Nov.

Passengers will see the final grape harvests of the season as autumn comes to a conclusion.

Onboard wine tastings and gourmet food will be offered, with fares inclusive of airfare with Emirates starting from \$7,990pp twin share.

Carnival Marine Reserve Pass

CONSTRUCTION of a viewing platform and stairway at Jinek Bay in Lifou, New Caledonia has been funded by Carnival Australia to give cruise passengers an opportunity to view coral formations and sea life while in port.

The company has introduced a marine reserve pass to gain access to the platform and the water and will be open only to 200 passengers for each ship visit in order not to damage the marine life.

Unrestricted swimming will remain available at other locations in Lifou during port visits.

Passes can be purchased on the P&O Cruises pre-cruise reservation system, or onboard if still available, and is priced at \$15 per person.

Funds raised from the new pass will be put towards local community maintenance of the marine reserve area.

Butting out on Crystal Cruises

SMOKING in indoor areas, except for the Connoisseur Lounge, will be banned on all Crystal Cruises departures from next year, including inside staterooms and suites

The move will take effect from the 05 Jan and 08 Jan departures of *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony*, with smoking in designated outdoor areas still permitted.

Conservation pact renewed

HOLLAND America Line and Seabourn have both renewed partnerships with the Marine Conservation Institute for three more years.

The pact sees both companies continue to offer education about marine conservation to guests and staff, along with buying seafood on voyages from responsible sustainable sources.

New AKL cruise gangway

INSTALLATION is now underway on a new covered gangway at Auckland Cruise Terminal's Shed 10 terminal, Ports of Auckland has announced.

The new boarding apparatus will be able to move up and down automatically with the ship as the tide changes and will assist in embarkation & disembarkation of passengers.

The gangway will be delivered to the port in sections, progressively installed and commissioned for use over the next two months, port officials have said.

Crew Profile



This week, *Cruise Weekly* chats with Damien Lacroix, General Manager of the *MS Marina* for Oceania Cruises.

How long have you been working on cruise ships for?
10 years.

When did you join Oceania Cruises?

I joined the Oceania Cruises family in March 2005.

What is your favourite cruising destination that you visit as part of your role?

How can you choose? It's virtually impossible to choose only one. From the sail-ins of Venice, Sydney, Hong Kong and Rio De Janeiro, to the scenery of the fjords in Norway and Chile, to the glaciers of Alaska, every destination has something different and beautiful to offer.

Briefly explain what your job entails and what passengers can expect from your services on board.

As General Manager, I am in charge of the hotel operation and the entire guest experience. On *MS Marina*, I am in charge of 663 crew members. I work closely with my heads of department to ensure our high quality standards are met each and every day and that we remain consistent. Our objective is to exceed our guests' expectations.

What do you enjoy most about your job with Oceania Cruises?

The people I work with and our loyal guests.

What is the most embarrassing request you've received from a passenger?

I once had a guest ask for a sweater while we were cruising a glacier in Chile to watch the penguins ashore. He did not realise that it would be so cold and brought only a Hawaiian shirt with him.

How do you spend your holidays/vacation when you return home?

I love to spend my vacations at home in France with my beautiful wife and daughter. I love teaching my daughter new things and hearing her say Papa. I also enjoy cooking for my family and friends and sharing great wine and conversation.



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Windstar purchase renamed

WINDSTAR Cruises has announced it has renamed the first of the three ships purchased from Seabourn as the *Star Pride*.

The vessel, currently undergoing a refit prior to relaunching next year under its new name, was formerly known as the *Seabourn Pride*.

A new season of voyages will go on sale next month, with the renamed *Star Pride* set to spend its first season sailing in Europe.

Yoga by Material Girl's trainer

STAR Clipper Cruises will offer free morning and sunset yoga & meditation classes aboard the *Star Flyer* on four special European and Mediterranean cruises during the Northern Summer, the liner has announced.

Classes will be taught by Christel Vollmer, whose personal job history includes serving as Madonna's private yoga instructor.

For more information on sailings offering the classes, phone Star Clippers on 1300 362 599.

Variety Cruises discount deals

SAVINGS of up to 35% are available on a number of Europe and Exotic Corners voyages with Variety Cruises, departing in 2013.

Similar deals are on sale for four, five and eight day Seychelles cruises on selected dates departing between 18 May and 26 October.

Back in Europe, further discounts have been released on some 2013 Mediterranean summer voyages departing May-October, with bookings to be made by 31 May - for details, phone Discover The World on 1800 623 267.

Carnival to pay back US Govt

MONEY spent by the US Coast Guard in assisting with the evacuation and rescue of passengers aboard two of Carnival Cruises' trouble affected sailings will be repaid, the company has this week announced.

Carnival stressed that it never said it would not reimburse the US Government agency for its assistance in recent *Carnival Triumph* and *Carnival Splendour* incidents if requested.

A statement issued by the company said, "Although no agencies have requested remuneration, the company has made the decision to voluntarily provide reimbursement to the Federal Government".

Estimates of the amount spent by the Coast Guard hover around the US\$3.4m mark, according to US Senator Jay Rockefeller, who has previously held discussions with Carnival CEO Micky Arison.

Anzac centenary choice cruise

AN EXCLUSIVE 'Gallipoli 2015' Captain's Choice charter voyage taking in Anzac Cove in Turkey for the 100th Anzac anniversary has been released for sale.

The 17-day itinerary will depart from Athens, sail to Turkey, with a special dawn service held onboard the ship before the ship continues on to Olympic, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy.

Only 250 guests will have the opportunity to experience the voyage, which will also include special guest Admiral Chris Barrie, the former Chief of the Defence Force.

The itinerary will be operated by Silversea's *Silver Wind*, with more information on the itinerary available on 1800 650 738.

Fred Olsen's longest voyage

A 119-NIGHT 'Grand Voyage' operated by the *Balmoral* has been released for sale by Fred Olsen Cruises, departing from Southampton.

The departure marks the longest single voyage ever released by the line, and will embark on 04 Jan, 2015.

Thirteen maiden calls will be made as part of the sailing, including stops in Sri Lanka, Okinawa in Japan, Thailand and Vietnam.

"We are thrilled to be unveiling our 'Grand Voyages' for 2015, and in particular our stunning 'Exploring the Far East' cruise aboard our flagship *Balmoral*, which is seven days longer than in 2013, but with 19 more ports," Fred Olsen Cruise Lines sales and marketing director Nathan Philpot said.



Recipe of the Month

Venison with pear and blueberry sauce

This week's recipe comes from Discover The World Marketing & Hurtigruten



Preparation

Place peeled pears into large saucepan together with the blueberry juice and sugar. Let simmer for approximately 3 hours until pears have absorbed the juice. Slice pears before serving.

Duchesse Potatoes: Place diced potatoes in boiling water for 20 minutes until tender. Drain in colander. Add egg yolk, butter and cream and mash until smooth. Once cooled place potato mixture in piping bag with large star point and pipe onto baking sheet. Bake at 180°C until golden brown.

Sauce: Combine beef stock, sour cream and cream and simmer on low heat. Fry thinly sliced champignon mushrooms and diced onion then add to stock. Add goat's cheese and stir until cheese melts. Add flour if required to thicken consistency.

Venison: Heat large frying pan with 1 tablespoon of oil until very hot. Sear fillets for 1½ minutes on each side until medium rare. Allow to stand for a few minutes then cover in foil to keep warm.

Vegetables: Cut red and yellow capsicum into various shapes and sauté together with diced spring onions. Blanch the broccoli florets.

Ready to serve!

Ingredients

- 400g Venison fillets
- 150g Yellow Capsicum
- 150g Red Capsicum
- 80g Spring Onions
- 200g Broccoli
- 500ml Blueberry Juice
- 2 x Pears
- 1tsp Sugar
- (Sauce)**
- Blueberry Juice
- 200ml beef stock
- 50g Goats Cheese
- 1 x Brown Onion
- 300g 'Champignon' Mushroom
- 50ml Sour Cream
- Cream to taste
- Plain Flour (if required)
- (Duchesse Potato)**
- 1.5kg Yukon Potatoes
- ¼ cup Thickened Cream
- 20g Butter
- 1 Egg

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Days at Sea: Crystal Symphony

by: Louise Goldsbury

CRYSTAL Cruises' Kiwis & Koalas itinerary, involves a lengthy crossing from Sydney to New Zealand, so it's perfect for the traveller who enjoys the indulgence of days at sea.

Boarding *Crystal Symphony* on Monday, we won't see land again until Thursday, when sailing through Milford Sound, and we won't step foot on it until the first port of call, Dunedin, on Friday.

As a big fan of staying onboard, I'm pleased to find the luxury ship's daily programs brimming with complimentary activities and entertainment.

As an example of ways to pass the time, this is how I spent Wednesday.

8am – Travelling with my mother, we start the morning with a light breakfast at the ocean-view Lido Café.

8.45am – Yoga class with the excellent instructor, Lisa Goodwin, who has two decades of experience.

(My mother, a total beginner, loves it so much that she ends up attending classes twice a day for the whole voyage.)

10am – I find a poolside cabana and read a book I borrowed from the library. A waiter brings me iced water.

11.30am – The Grand Gala Buffet showcases the culinary creations of the executive chef, with amazing ice sculptures, fruit carvings and cake displays.

This food festival is held in the sun-filled atrium, where passengers are served by crew at each station.

Mum finds me next to the desserts. Of course, we eat far too much of everything.

12.30 – Team trivia is too hard for our holiday brains so we head back to the pool deck, where the Crystal Sextet is performing, and take over the huge Jacuzzi.

1.30 – I go to the destination lecture about the fjords of the South Island while mum disappears for 12 laps around the ship's promenade deck, obviously feeling guilty about lunch.

2.30 – Wine-tasting is taking place in the dining room but I'm saving myself for martinis so I decide to watch the tango lesson upstairs.

3.30 – Afternoon tea, served by white-gloved waiters and accompanied by a jazz group, in the beautiful Palm Court lounge.

4pm – I rush down to Luxe nightclub for the martini presentation, which is highly educational.

5pm – Meet mum back in our penthouse suite where our butler has left us some canapés, so we relax on the balcony, watching the sunset over the ocean, and then get changed for formal night.

7pm – Pre-dinner drinks at the Avenue Saloon with some friends we've made during the cruise.

8pm – Dinner at Silk Road by Nobu Matsuhisa. We sit at the sushi bar so we can chat with the chefs as they work.

10.30pm – Hilarious show, Diva, by a vocal impressionist in the Galaxy Lounge.

Then we are very ready for sleep – we need to replenish our energy for tomorrow's day at sea!

Crystal Symphony returns to Australia and New Zealand in February 2014 - for bookings, see www.wiltrans.com.au.



Grand Gala desserts



Jacuzzi on the pool deck



Dining room waiters

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