

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 23 July 2013

## Cruise lines receive national awards

APT and Royal Caribbean International were the big winners at the National Travel Industry Awards last weekend.

WITH two cruise-related categories, there could be only two winners at the Australian Federation of Travel Agents' annual awards night, held at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion this past Saturday night.

Judged by a panel of industry veterans, Best Cruise Operator (Australian-based operation) was awarded to Royal Caribbean International, while the international-based operation award went to APT.

In the general travel categories, APT received a second industry recognition as Best Domestic Tour Operator.

Accepting the two trophies, APT CEO Chris Hall said: "We are honoured and thrilled to receive these awards which demonstrate the industry's recognition of the calibre of our product.

"Being awarded Best Cruise Operator – International is particularly pleasing, as we work hard to deliver the highest level of luxury cruise product available."

Gavin Smith, RCI's regional vice-president Asia-Pacific, said: "I'm delighted that Royal Caribbean won Best Domestic Cruise Operator for the first time.

"It was also a good year for Celebrity Cruises, receiving its first nomination in the Best International Cruise Line category."

Hosted by TV personality Andrew Daddo, the black-tie event was attended by 1,200 members of the travel industry and included a spectacular surprise performance by singer Jessica Mauboy.

For photos from the night, see the Trade issue of *Cruise Weekly* this Thursday.

## A note from the Publisher

**SPECIAL** congratulations to *Cruise Weekly* editor Louise Goldsbury, who this past weekend was awarded Australia's Best Travel Writer at the 2013 National Travel Industry Awards - the trade's annual night of nights.

Louise was formally recognised by her peers for her years of unwavering dedication, empowering enthusiasm and unmatched skill, demonstrated on a weekly basis including in the pages of *Cruise Weekly*.

For another example of the work for which Louise was honoured, see **page four**.

## Consumers put trust in P&O

**AUSTRALIANS** have voted P&O Cruises as one of the country's most trusted brands, according to the 2013 Reader's Digest Trusted Brands Survey.

Cruise lines were included as one of the options for the first time this year, with P&O ranking among products such as Dettol, Dulux, Colgate, Cadbury and Guide Dogs.

"All of the brands which have been ranked as leaders in this survey are well-established and much-loved Australian companies," P&O Cruises senior vice president Tammy Marshall said of the accolade.

Marshall said key to the company's inclusion in the rankings was constantly evolving to suit the needs of its passengers, as well as engaging with its customers and listening to their needs.

P&O Cruises was among 40 brands that were included in the official results.

## New Silversea Grand Voyages

**RESERVATIONS** have opened on two new "Grand Voyages", to be operated by Silversea Cruises in 2015, the company has announced.

Departing on 07 Jan 2015, *Silver Shadow* will venture to 36 ports in Central & South America as part of a 62-day Circle South America cruise.

Australia will be visited as part of one of the sailings, with the *Silver Spirit* heading to a number of South Pacific & Australasian ports on a 64-day round-trip from Los Angeles departing on 22 Jan.

The latter voyage includes an overnight stay in both Sydney and Melbourne.

## Vietnam travel writing course

**ASPIRING** travel writers can learn and hone their craft with the assistance of award-winning journalist Rob McFarland during one of four special literary tours in Vietnam in Mar 2014.

The 12-day Vietnam Travel Writing Tour is on sale through Travel Indochina, priced from \$2,750pp twin share and includes four days of tuition based in Ho Chi Minh City before touring the country honing newly-learned skills in places such as Hoi An & cruising Halong Bay. For more information, phone 1300 365 355.



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## Carnival look ahead to a new Vista

The next Carnival Cruise Lines' 4,000-passenger ship will be named *Carnival Vista* to reflect its emphasis on ocean views.

A COUPLE of vague details have emerged about the upcoming 135,000 GRT superliner, set to launch in 2016.

Announced to media onboard *Carnival Sunshine*, during its first season in Europe, company executives said *Carnival Vista* would be "extremely connected to the ocean".

"We're starting to use the ship names as a touchstone for how we think about the design," Berra added.

Carnival chief marketing officer Jim Berra explained that the design would maximise water views from as many public areas as possible.

"At the end of the day, that is why people are cruising – they want the salt air, they want the

ocean breeze, they want to look out and see the ocean."

*Carnival Vista* will look different to the line's latest ship, *Carnival Breeze*, although some spaces will be the same, Berra said.

Changes were most likely in entertainment, kids clubs and dining, he hinted.

No further information was released about new features, itineraries or home ports.

After a period of expansion, *Vista* is the only ship that Carnival has ordered for delivery over the next three years.

It will be the 25th vessel in the fleet.

## Guilty verdicts for Costa crew

LAWYERS for victims and survivors of the *Costa Concordia* shipwreck have criticised sentences of less than three years to five crew members charged with varying degrees of involvement in the disaster, claiming the penalties issued were "an embarrassment".

The company's crisis coordinator received the longest sentence of two years and 10 months, while the ship's hotel director, two bridge officers and a helmsman were also sent to serve periods starting from 23 months.

The trial of Captain Francesco Schettino has been delayed further until September.

## Sea Cloud Cruises preview sail

FOUR-NIGHT taster cruises between Vienna and Budapest will be offered for the first time by Sea Cloud Cruises ahead of *River Cloud II* commencing its season on the Danube in Apr next year.

Earlybird rates for the preview cruises start from \$920pp twin share, with more details available, visit [www.seacloud.com](http://www.seacloud.com).

## An Astor info session success

MORE than 200 already booked & potential customers of cruise ship *Astor* attended a recent information night to learn more about the vessel, due to make its home in Fremantle for the next three summers.

The small-ship *Astor* will operate a season of 15 sailings based from Fremantle upon its arrival, due by Dec 11 this year.

*Astor* charter firm Cruise & Maritime Voyages says it will host further information sessions in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, with specific dates and venues to be advised shortly.

MEANWHILE, renowned chefs Vince Gareffa from Mondo Butchers & Chris Taylor of Frasers will conduct cooking demonstrations on an upcoming Wine, Food & Fitness cruise, scheduled to depart on 16 Dec.

The cruise, which will visit Bunbury and Albany, will also offer yoga and pilates classes, numerous activities and onboard sport events - see [www.cmvaustralia.com](http://www.cmvaustralia.com) for more details.

## Mississippi in the Scenic guide

A SEVEN-NIGHT cruise down the mighty Mississippi River features in a new Southern Belles itinerary from Scenic Tours as part of its recently launched 2014 USA itinerary range.

Earlybird deals are on sale for bookings made by 19 November, including a three-night stopover in Hawaii plus savings per couple.

The sailing from Memphis to New Orleans is operated by a traditional steamboat & includes stops in a number of riverside towns such as Vicksburg, St Francisville and Baton Rouge.

Phone 1300 723 642 for more information.

## G Adventures extends Africa

ADVENTURE tour operator G Adventures has extended its West Africa cruise to 32-days due to the popularity of the itinerary.

The departure aboard the *MS Expedition* travels up the West Coast of Africa, visiting 16 ports in 14 countries including Namibia, Benin, Angola, Ghana, Togo and many more, now concluding in Marrakech, Morocco.



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## HMAS Sydney remembered aboard Dawn

**NEARLY 2000** passengers aboard the *Dawn Princess* recently commemorated the wartime sinking of the *HMAS Sydney* with a special onboard service during a cruise last week.

Travelling from the WA port of Fremantle on its way to Indonesia, the *Dawn Princess* service took place directly over the final resting place of the navy vessel, which was located in 2008.

The service included an account of the events

which led to the sinking of *HMAS Sydney* after its 19 Nov, 1941 encounter with the German warship *Kormoran*, and ended with a wreath being cast on the water before the cruise continued north to Indonesia.

It was the heaviest loss for the Royal Australian Navy during World War II, with the entire crew of 645 sailors lost with the vessel.

The memorial service event was not a once-off, as Princess Cruises says it will offer the commemoration cruise again next year aboard sister vessel *Sea Princess* during a 15-night cruise, departing from Fremantle on 03 Aug.



## Official Splendor fire report

**A NUMBER** of technical recommendations have been made in an official report released by the US Coast Guard into a fire onboard the *Carnival Splendor* in 2010.

The fire in November that year occurred in the aft engine room and two switchboard rooms, leaving the vessel without power for multiple days and adrift off the US West Coast.

Among the report's suggestions is for Carnival Cruise Lines to review onboard Safety Management Systems and to eliminate risk factors that contributed to the incident.

*Splendor* was on its second day of a cruise from Long Beach, California to the Mexican Riviera and took three days to be towed to San Diego in an event much like what happened to the *Carnival Triumph* in Feb this year.

A US\$300m "enhancement program" was announced by Carnival Cruise Lines earlier this year (**CW** 18 Apr), which will see operations and backup systems upgraded on 24 Carnival vessels and across 101 ships from nine brands operated globally by the Carnival Corporation.

## Scientific trips to the Antarctic

**MEMBERS** of the public are being invited to participate in two scientific research voyages to Antarctica to celebrate the centenary of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, which was led by revered scientist Sir Douglas Mawson.

Only 26 berths are available on the 2013-14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition to the Sub-Antarctic islands and Commonwealth Bay and will be operated by Adventure Associates in conjunction with the University of NSW.

The first voyage, a 13-day sailing, will depart from Bluff, New Zealand on 25 November, and will be followed by a second 28-day departure from Hobart, Australia on 08 December.

Both will include climate change specialists & scientists carrying out actual research work on oceanography, climate and biology, with guests to also play a part in the research carried out.

Berths are priced from \$8,050ppts inclusive of all meals on board.

For more details or to book, phone (02) 8916 3000 or visit [www.adventureassociates.com](http://www.adventureassociates.com).

## Scenic to be featured on SBS

**A NEW** program set to air on SBS starting this week will feature a Scenic Tours European river cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam.

Welsh singer, TV and radio personality Aled Jones travelled on the cruise to film segments for the BBC's Classical Destinations series.

The series will focus on the musical histories and the great composers who lived & worked in the towns and cities visited during the cruise including Vienna, Salzburg, Bonn, Cologne, Melk, Bratislava, Linz and more.

Part 1 of 13 in the Classical Destinations series premieres on SBS from Thu 25 Jul at 6pm.



**THE** negative headlines just seem to keep coming for Carnival Cruise Lines.

Fresh off the wires recently is news of a class action lawsuit being brought on the line by some passengers who are claiming that the onboard hot tubs are crawling with flesh-eating bacteria.

According to one passenger, who was sailing on the *Carnival Paradise* in late 2011, one of his legs "turned black" as a result of contracting "hot tub folliculitis", with doctors wishing to amputate the infected leg.

The passenger's leg was eventually saved after spending more than week in hospital.

Allegedly, the bacteria was not limited to only one ship, with passengers on a May 2012 sailing of the *Carnival Fascination* saying they contracted Multiple Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) from using one of the ship's hot tubs.

The case has not been settled, and the class action is continuing.

## Regal Princess team named

**CAPTAIN** Ed Perrin will take control of the next Princess Cruises vessel to debut - *Regal Princess*, due to be launched in Jun next year.

Perrin will lead a four-stripe team who bring a combined 100 years seagoing experience, also including Relief Captain Dino Sagani, Relief Captain John Foster, Chief Engineer Rosario Segreto, Hotel General Manager Dirk Brand and Staff Captain Aldo Traverso.

The new *Regal Princess* will be a sister ship to *Royal Princess*, which was officially named by its Godmother, Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton last month (**CW** 18 Jun) and will feature the same inclusions including an over-water SeaWalk and Princess Live! TV studio.

## SeaDream II splits Burma

**TWO** 13-night sailings in Burma scheduled by the SeaDream Yacht Club on *SeaDream II* are now also available as split into six and seven-night itineraries instead, the company has said.

The voyages, due to take place in November and December this year include two nights in Yangon as well as visiting some lesser known islands in Malaysia and Thailand.

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## Ship Review: *Scenic Ruby*

by: Louise Goldsbury

MY balcony is so big, I could've rented it out to a third passenger. And it's not due to an upgrade to a fancy suite: this is the standard space on 80% of cabins on Scenic Tours' *Scenic Ruby*.

Unlike the average 'French balcony' on many river vessels, this one has room for a small table and two chairs from which to admire the canal city view as we depart Amsterdam.

When a chilly breeze starts blowing, I press a magic button that closes the upper section, sealing the warmth in to my new private 'sun lounge'. It's like a slow-motion secret room makeover. But it also makes me a hermit: I want to stay in there all day.

The crew do their best to lure me out, with reminders about the gourmet meals, free shore excursions and free drinks.

Eventually we emerge for a gelato from the River Café, where the mostly Australian passengers are socialising.

Inside, the most impressive area is Portobellos Italian restaurant.

Smaller and classier than the main dining venue, it makes good use of floor-to-ceiling windows.

So often on a cruise – river or ocean – you can't easily see outside during meals, but this ship is all about the views.

As a sister to *Scenic Sapphire* and *Scenic Diamond*, the *Ruby* is certainly a shiny jewel of Europe's rivers, fresh from a refurbishment earlier this year.

Changes include new furniture, soft furnishings and carpet, high-definition TVs linked to Mac computers in every cabin, free faster speed Wi-Fi internet, and a revamped reception.

All passengers also enjoy the services of butlers who are on call to shine shoes, deliver snacks and assist with activities on land.

Breakfast and lunch are served buffet-style, while dinner is a single seating at 7pm. In summer, a BBQ may be held on the top deck.

The 15-day 'Jewels of Europe' itinerary also stands apart, with free shore excursions that are often at additional cost on other cruise lines.

On the first full day, choices include a sightseeing canal cruise, a bus trip to the windmills of Zaanse Schans, or a bicycle tour of Amsterdam.

### "All passengers also enjoy the services of butlers"

The next day, in Cologne, a private medieval banquet is held in the 12th century Marksburg Castle.

Other highlights include a cable car ride in Rudesheim, baking cakes in Miltenberg, wine-tasting in the underground cellars of the Prince Bishop's Residenz Palace and a tour of beautiful Bamberg.

Passengers can also see the infamous WWII sites of Nuremberg, and explore Salzburg, the spectacular setting for 'The Sound of Music' and birthplace of Mozart.

Two days are spent in Vienna to savour the city's architecture, a classical concert, a guided tour of Schönbrunn Palace or a visit to the Spanish Riding School.

Finally, in Budapest, options include a city tour or a relaxing day in the famous thermal baths.

As with all Scenic cruises, fares include unlimited complimentary drinks, butler service, shore excursions, airport transfers, tipping and gratuities.

For details, see [www.scenictours.com.au](http://www.scenictours.com.au) or call 1300 723 642.



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