



## CCL starts Pack 'N' Go, agent rates

*Carnival Spirit* has launched a second fare program and cruises for agents priced from \$590.

**THE** reborn Carnival Cruise Lines, bolstered by its dedicated sales team, is forging ahead with a range of initiatives for the Australian cruise market.

Led by new sales director Anton Loeb, the company is courting consumers with last-minute Pack 'N' Go deals, as well as delivering long-awaited travel agent rates on selected *Carnival Spirit* sailings.

Speaking to **CW** this morning, Jennifer Vandekreeke, CCL's director Australia & NZ, said that both new offerings would help agents sell *Spirit* holidays to their clients.

Aimed at travellers with flexible plans, the cut-price Pack 'N' Go fares have limited availability on selected sailings and stricter terms and conditions, but start as low as \$650 for a 10-day Pacific Island cruise, compared to \$940 at the First In rate.

Pack 'N' Go guests must pay in full within 24

hours and only receive their cabin type within 30 days of departure.

Cancellation terms are also less flexible.

For agents, rates start at \$590 for an interior cabin.

"We have had so many requests for agent rates so it is exciting that we finally have them," Vandekreeke said.

"The best way to get to know our product is to experience it yourself - being able to say to clients that you were just onboard gives you credibility like nothing else can."

Commenting on the recent establishment of a separate *Spirit* sales team, Vandekreeke said it was "a difficult decision but the right decision".

"We have a specific brand personality, so stuff that worked for us didn't work for others.

"Now we can walk in the door representing one brand, not five brands, and engage on a much deeper level with agents."

For full details, see [goccl.com.au](http://goccl.com.au).

### ALL THE CRUISE NEWS

Today's trade issue of **CW** features 7 pages.

## CMV shares sales data

**CRUISE** and Maritime Voyages has reported growing confidence in *Astor*, its 620-pax ship to be based in WA in 2013-14, by revealing its current sales figures.

A company spokesperson told **Cruise Weekly** that the Christmas Bali cruise is 15% booked and the New Year cruise is 18% booked.

Six out of eight premium cabins on Cruise A413 Round Australia, departing 28 Jan 2014, have also been sold.

He said CMV was pleased with the progress in a short period of time.

Until two weeks ago, its booking engine was not yet live and local sales were handled manually.

"Pre sales are doing really well, it's phenomenal," said Vilma Rovedatti, sales and marketing manager.

Introductory savers fares, with up to 25% discount on a limited number of twin and single cabin bookings, are valid for bookings made before 15 May 2013 (excluding the New Year voyage).

For full details of the voyage and pricing, see [www.cmvaustralia.com](http://www.cmvaustralia.com).



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Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

## Cruising towards Social Media

Social Media has arrived - and we can't ignore it anymore.

First it was via websites, then Facebook, and now it's all about Twitter.

This month I've been exploring at length its capabilities towards the cruise retail market, trying to understand its potentiality towards increasing business opportunities.

Travel Daily's successful symposium two weeks ago on the future of travel agents featured Kim McKay, from Klick Communications, who so rightly defined social media as about creating a community; its management doesn't necessarily have to be used for tangible profit.

I felt that some in the audience were confusing the term 'technology' (the threat of new booking platforms taking business volume) with 'social media'.

But both are not potentially "evil" to our future; the two have different business strengths.

Like Kim, since studying the Social Media phenomena, my verdict is that its best use is about creating a community; a community of followers, fans, advocates, a community of belonging. Sending constant deals doesn't seem to have the same engagement.

Cruising has a major advantage in social media - it is by far the strongest sector in the travel industry with a natural community affiliation.

Everyone who has cruised feels like they belong in a special 'club', and good cruise specialists have the opportunity to build that feeling of belonging towards their own business - creating a fan base.

I have found social media easy, manageable (via platforms), and most of all, engaging when used correctly.

Cruise industry businesses now have the potential to explode with social community usage.

Follow us on Twitter; @CLIAAustralasia and you can keep in the loop on cruise industry insights and be part of our mobile cruising community.

## Survey reveals cruise complaints

Expensive drinks and extra costs are the worst parts of cruising, according to consumers.

**HUNDREDS** of Australians have trashed cruise ships on leading consumer review website, [ProductReview.com.au](http://ProductReview.com.au).

The analysis of consumer feedback indicates that many local travellers rated their cruise holiday experience as "terrible", with some vowing to never sail again.

The five most common gripes were the high cost of alcohol, the misleading use of "all-inclusive", skipped ports of call, blocked toilets, and overcharged accounts.

"The frequency of these top five complaints is a real concern," said the company's consumer satisfaction expert, Sam Williamson.

"Not only are mistakes and mishaps compromising people's holidays, but many feel ripped off by hidden costs and missing visits to ports, which are key reasons they embarked in the first place."

The website is devoted to people's reviews of products and services available in Australia, including travel, home appliances and beauty.

"Cruises have received hundreds of reviews and there's a large group of unhappy customers who feel rorted, reporting they did not receive the experience they paid for," Williamson said.

The number-one complaint "came up time and time again", he said.

"Some reviewers compared the prices of drinks to costly Sydney nightclubs, which can become incredibly expensive, particularly when guests cannot bring their own drinks on board."

While most travellers take the term "all-inclusive" loosely, he said many were "outraged by how frequently they need to shell out extra money" for soft drinks, shore excursions, specialty restaurants and bingo.

They also complained about poor compensation, as little as \$25 onboard credit, for missing scheduled ports due to the ship's mechanical problems.

The most common places where people reported being overcharged were at the bars or kiosks.

"While overcharging is not a problem exclusive to cruises, it definitely left a sour taste in people's mouths, even if the rest of their experience was positive," Williamson said. P&O's Pacific Dawn is the most reviewed ship, with 270 reviews, but most are positive and rated it an average 3.6 out of 5.

Avalon Waterways, Azamara and Orion scored full marks but from only one or two reviews. Travel agents are also reviewed on the site.

## HAL adds Singapore sailings

**TWO** new 14-night itineraries out of Singapore have been added to Holland America Line's 2014 Asian cruise line-up.

Departing onboard *Volendam* on 17 Feb, the first itinerary includes calls in Malacca, Penang, Porto Malai and Port Klang (o/night) in Malaysia; Phuket, Thailand; Rangoon (o/night) in Myanmar; and Port Blair in India.

The second itinerary, Indonesian Discovery, takes place onboard *Rotterdam* and *Volendam* (06 Jan, 14 and 28 Feb and 14 Mar) and calls at Jakarta; Semarang (Java); Lembar (Lombok); Komodo Island; Makassar (Sulawesi); Probolinggo and Suabaya (Java), with an overnight stay in Bali.



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[info@cmvaustralia.com](mailto:info@cmvaustralia.com)

## Marina wows Sydneysiders

**THE** five-star *Marina* swanned into Sydney this week, giving locals a chance to gawk and covet a cabin, as she parks for three days at the iconic Overseas Passenger Terminal.

Last night a few lucky industry members were treated to a tour of her splendour, which includes six restaurants, Bon Appétit Culinary Center and the fine arts Studio, not to mention the reams of expensive artwork such as a pair of Picassos.

Speaking about the ship Craig Owens, director of Key Accounts and Communications at Oceania Cruises, said "Guests just love it, we've got a return rate of over 50%".

And it seems that Australian guests in particular are enamored with Oceania Cruises, with Owens confirming that Aussies make up the largest nationality count for the cruise line outside of North America.

For more details, see next Tuesday's *CW*.



## AIDA explores Asia in 2015

**GERMAN** cruise line AIDA Cruises will explore Japan, China and Singapore in 2015, during a maiden 86-day voyage of the company's new, as yet un-named, ship.

Departing Yokohama on 22 Mar 2015, the voyage will call into ports in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Dubai, Greece, Sicily, Spain, Portugal and the UK before arriving in Germany on 15 Jun.

Several of the port calls will be multi-night stops, see [www.aida.de](http://www.aida.de) for details.

## Kids cruise free with Crystal

**CRYSTAL** Cruises is adding 17 voyages to the line's 'Kids Sail Free' program.

Citing popular demand as the reasoning behind its decision, the cruise line previously had only featured the deal on four European cruises during Jun and Jul.

With the change, the deal now applies on a selection of seven- to 15-day voyages in the Mediterranean, Western Europe, North Cape, Baltic, British Isles, Canary Islands, and across the Atlantic from May-Dec aboard *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony*.

## Business Development Manager NSW, P&O Cruises

With a local cruising history of 80 years, P&O Cruises is Australia's most loved cruise line. From the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, to the best of Australia's east and southern coasts, P&O Cruises delivers some of the southern hemisphere's most incredible destinations.

P&O Cruises is part of the world's leading cruise holiday company, Carnival Corporation (represented in the Asia Pacific region by Carnival Australia). Growth in the Australian cruise market is outpacing all international markets with brands managed by Carnival Australia (including P&O Cruises, Princess Cruises, Cunard, Carnival Cruise Lines, Seabourn and Holland America Line) representing the majority of the local cruise industry.

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Further information, including a Job Profile, can be found on our careers website: [careers.carnivalaustralia.com](http://careers.carnivalaustralia.com) Job Reference: CAR/1053758

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## Travel writing course

**ASPIRING** travel writers can learn how to turn their cruises into published articles with two intensive workshops to be held in Melbourne and Sydney.

The two-day course covers writing techniques, editing, marketing, pitching to editors and travel photography.

Students receive detailed feedback on their writing as well as the opportunity to submit a feature to be critiqued after the course has finished.

Previously unpublished participants have gone on to have their work appear in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian* and *Cruise Weekly*.

The course is run by award-winning travel writer Rob McFarland and costs \$399 per person.

Limited to 12 people, the Melbourne session takes place at the Vibe Savoy Hotel on 6 and 13 Apr; the Sydney course is on 18 and 25 May.

For details, see <http://robmcfarland.org/travel-writing-course/>.

To reserve your place, email [robmcfarland@yahoo.com](mailto:robmcfarland@yahoo.com).

## Variety and Sky in Europe

**APT** has released a preview brochure for luxury small ship cruising of Europe, Scandinavia, Greece, The Black Sea and Egypt/Jordan next year.

Featuring three itineraries onboard the 57-suite *Island Sky* and six cruises onboard the 36-cabin *Variety Voyager*, APT's Luxury Small Ship preview brochure carries a \$2,000 per couple air credit deal for early bookings (until sold out).

For more details, or to order a copy of the brochure see [www.aptouring.com.au](http://www.aptouring.com.au).

## European cruise growth

**AUSTRALIA** isn't the only place experiencing a growth spurt in the cruise industry, with figures released from CLIA Europe revealing that a whopping 6.139 million Europeans took a cruise voyage in 2012.

The figure marks an two fold increase in the numbers of European cruisers in just 8 years, with the data also showing a 5 year annual average European passenger growth of 8%.

CLIA's data also revealed a boost in Northern European cruising, with 10% increase in the sector in 2012, compared to 2011 results.

## Business Development Manager VIC/TAS, Princess Cruises

Princess Cruises is the third largest cruise ship operator in the world and part of the world's leading cruise holiday company, Carnival Corporation (represented in the Asia Pacific region by Carnival Australia). Known as the Destination Experts, Princess Cruises visits more than 330 ports around the world. Locally, Princess Cruises has operated cruises for more than 10 years and has three ships departing from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Fremantle. Princess Cruises is a multi-award winning cruise line having won AFTA's Best Cruise Operator for four years running.

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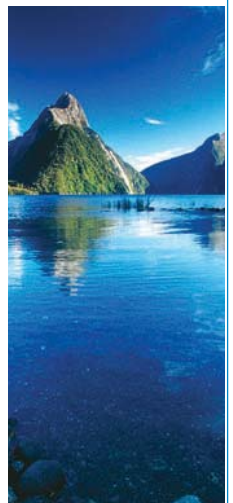
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**COME** and see the gherkin.

Cruisers to London may soon be able to see a brand new attraction, the humble gherkin.

A symbol of all that some love, and some hate, about hamburgers, and noted for its ability to entertain simply by racing down the pane of a McDonalds window, the gherkin may become a feature of the London skyline during April, with plans to cover the iconic Gherkin building in its likeness.

The brainchild of online bingo site Jackpotjoy.com, the stunt would see the 180-metre tall building shrouded in the knobby skin of a pickled gherkin, in a process would take 10 workers 900 hours to complete.

"The Gherkin is such an iconic building and with a name like that we just couldn't resist the opportunity for some more daft fun by attempting to transform it into the very thing it is so aptly named after," said Jackpotjoy's md Michael Saunders.

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### MSC Arabian cruise deal

**CRUISERS** who book and deposit one of MSC Cruises' 2013-14 Arabian Peninsula cruises by 30 Apr will receive an additional AU\$100 per person.

To ensure that guests secure the AU\$100, agents should quote EB100 when making the reservation.

*MSC Lirica's* seven-night Arabian Peninsula cruise departs from Dubai and treats guests to highlights including Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Heritage Village and mountainous countryside. Prices start from \$649pp, see [msccruises.com.au](http://msccruises.com.au).

### TTW offers Europe with deals

**UNTIL 29 Mar**, Travel the World is offering guests an array of deals for HAL Europe cruises.

Extras include onboard credit of up to \$340; and free onboard bonuses including Bon Voyage Sparkling Wine and Pinnacle Grill dinners.

Itineraries on sale include the 11-night Ancient Mysteries cruise; 22-night Adriatic and Roman Explorer Collection voyage; 10-night Gems of the Baltic Copenhagen roundtrip; and the 19-night Mediterranean Serenade.

See [www.traveltheworld.com.au](http://www.traveltheworld.com.au).

### Sharon Stone godmother

**SILVER** screen icon Sharon Stone has been selected to be the godmother of APT-AmaWaterways' 106-passenger *AmaVida*.

Specifically designed for the Duoro River, *AmaVida* measures 79 metres in length, features accommodation for 108 guests and offers a choice of six suite styles.

*AmaVida* will join the fleet on 22 Mar, and will sail a selection of three itineraries.

"There has been strong take-up of this new APT cruise, especially from our customers who have already cruised the Rhine-Main-Danube network with us," said APT's general manager marketing, Debra Fox.

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### Guests get a Royal education

**AS** a result of a new partnership, Silversea is set to get a swathe of detailed scientific and historical information from none other than the renowned Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).

Under the terms of the partnership, the Society will provide Silversea with some of the world's most important geographical research and archive material to share with its guests travelling on Silversea expedition ships, including *Silver Explorer* and *Silver Galapagos*.

There are more than two million items in the Society's historic Collections, including over one million maps, 500,000 photographs, 250,000 books and journals, manuscripts, and iconic artifacts which date back as far as 1482.

### The Captain shows off Fiji

**CAPTAIN** Cook Cruises recently treated four TravelManagers' personal travel managers to seven sun drenched days onboard *MV Reef Endeavour* as she circumnavigated Vanua Levu.

The quartet, Christopher Cogan and Kirsty Hewitt from Victoria together with Diane Craig and Lyn Tyson from New South Wales are pictured below together with members of the local indigenous community, on arrival at Nakawaga Village on Mali Island.



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## Azamara upgrades

**GUESTS** who book a selected Azamara Club Cruises European voyage before 31 Mar, will be upgraded from an oceanview stateroom to a veranda stateroom.

## Snag Summer Solstice fares

**DISCOVER** the World Cruising is offering special Summer Solstice Fares on selected Hurtigruten cruise dates from 01 May to 31 Jul 2013 on the following itineraries: 12-day Classic Round Voyage – Bergen Round Trip; 11-day Classic Norwegian Discovery Voyage – Bergen - Trondheim; seven-day Classic Voyage North – Bergen - Kirkenes; and a six-day Classic Voyage South – Kirkenes - Bergen.

As an added bonus, guests who book between 01 Apr and 30 Sep 2013 will receive a special 120th Anniversary Shipboard Credit of GBP120 per cabin.

Prices start from \$1,376ppn based on a six-day Classic Voyage South.

Call 1800 623 623 267.

## Royal Caribbean: safety priority

**ROYAL** Caribbean has launched a new video, 'Tapping the Experts: Maritime Advisory Board Keeps Safety a Priority'.

To watch the video **CLICK HERE**.

## Legal action regarding Oriana

**REPORTS** are surfacing of legal action against P&O parent Carnival by 32 guests who suffered norovirus whilst on a Christmas cruise onboard *Oriana*.

The law firm representing the guests, Irwin Mitchell, has said that the passengers are demanding to know why the cruise line did not inform them that the previous cruise had an outbreak of the stomach bug, and that there was a possibility that the bug may still be loitering within the ship.

"Official guidelines for the management of norovirus infections on cruise ships state that a vessel affected by an outbreak should undergo a deep clean before setting sail again," a spokesperson for the law firm told media.

"However, the reports we have heard from passengers have raised concerns that they were not made aware of any previous problems onboard the ship until after they actually boarded the ship and that the vessel set sail again for their voyage only two hours after the previous cruise - information which may have made them rethink their own stay on the vessel," the spokesperson added.

## Princess regally eyes the Med

**PRINCESS** Cruises 18th ship, *Regal Princess*, (to be delivered in 2014) will sail on a series of 12-day Mediterranean cruises, starting in the Northern hemisphere spring season 2014.

The route will take the 3,600-passenger ship from Venice to Barcelona.

The ship itself will include highlights such as a glass-enclosed walkway that extends 28 feet over the ship's edge and a grand new marble swathed atrium called the Piazza, which will act as a central feature for dining and entertainment.

## Getaway with the Grammy's

**MUSIC** fans will be excited to learn that Norwegian Cruise Line has partnered with The Recording Academy to create the Grammy Experience at Sea.

Launching in February 2014 onboard *Norwegian Getaway*-when she debuts, the Grammy Experience will be located on Deck 8 and will feature artifacts chosen and curated by the Grammy Museum in LA.

In the evenings, the venue will feature live performances by past Grammy winners and nominees, among others.

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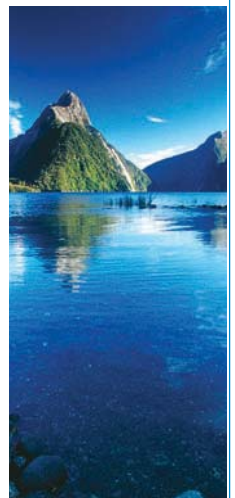
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## Carnival AIMEs at groups

THE meetings and incentives sector is an increasingly important target for Carnival Australia, according to the company, which recently showcased three of its cruise brands at AIME - P&O Cruises, Holland America Line and Seabourn.

"People are looking for something different - an alternative for traditional meetings and incentive groups - and cruising offers a 'wow' factor," said Carnival Australia business development manager Rebecca Mutanen.

"Exhibiting at AIME this year opened up opportunities for us not only to generate real sales leads but also to learn more about what buyers want from a corporate meeting or incentive, so we are definitely interested in returning next year," she added.

## MSC launches bike experience

CRUISERS tired of plain old walking, can now pick up a bike and ride through Europe, following the launch of the MSC Bike Experience.

The Experience offers guests onboard *MSC Magnifica* a selection of cycle tours in ports of call in Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK between 15 Apr and 01 Sep.

## Marco Polo runs aground

*MARCO Polo* has ran aground this week in Sortland (Norway) after striking uncharted rock.

No one was injured during the accident and the ship immediately returned to the port of Sortland where repairs were made to the hull before the vessel resumed its 14-night voyage.

## New BDM's for P&O and Princess

P&O Cruises and Princess Cruises have revealed the names of the business development managers who are the faces of the cruise lines' new brand-specific sales teams.

The list for P&O Cruises includes: Jessica Plunkett, NSW/ACT; Angus Mackay, NSW; Dylan Hearne, QLD; Andrew Thwaites, QLD; and Kylie Clancy, VIC.

The Princess list includes: Cherie Bowman, NSW; Rachael Tyrell, NSW; Peter Darby, QLD; Helen Mezzan, QLD; Sally-Anne Matthews, VIC; and Emma Pequin, WA/NT/SA.

"The new teams come into effect from today and are part of Carnival Australia's next big step forward to drive sales, business growth and operational efficiency," a Carnival statement said.

# Marina

HAS ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA  
FOR HER INAUGURAL VISIT



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