

CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 5 November 2013

New vessels for the Amazon & Asia

Haimark is planning a “more affordable” luxury ship in the Peruvian Amazon – and five more ships for Asian rivers.

US-BASED Haimark Travel has signed a contract to build a 40-passenger vessel for six-night roundtrip sailings from Iquitos, Peru, promising a competitive price compared to other “extremely expensive” ships on the river.

According to the company’s Australian representative Damien van Eyk, the region is undergoing a resurgence of interest among Australian travellers who are seeking better value.

“I think the growth in travel to South America from Australia is driven by a couple of factors, such as the strength of the Australian dollar, improved air access with Qantas launching

flights to Santiago and an increased appetite by Australians for travel to more exotic locations,” Van Eyk told **Cruise Weekly**.

“We see this trend continuing and our ability to offer a river cruise on one of the most iconic rivers in the world, the Amazon, will be a cornerstone of any trip to the region.”

Haimark, which was formed last year by three former Pandaw River Expeditions executives, is rapidly raising the bar for luxury river cruising outside of Europe.

The unnamed Amazon ship is the latest of six boutique-style river vessels currently under construction that Haimark co-owns or operates.

In September 2014, the company launches its first two ships: the 56-passenger *Irrawaddy Explorer* in Myanmar and the 68-passenger *Mekong Navigator* in Vietnam and Cambodia.

In January 2015, it plans to debut the smaller 24-passenger *Mekong Princess* and the 56-passenger *Ganges Voyager* in India’s West Bengal region, followed by the *Ganges Voyager II* in September 2015.

Haimark sells space on its six vessels on a charter-only basis to cruise operators such as Scenic Tours and Travel Indochina, who then sell the cruises to Australian travellers.

Star Cruises Earlybird release

ADVANCE booking bonuses of up to 50% off full fares have been released by Star Cruises, along with a range of new itineraries set to make their debut in the 2014/2015 season.

Brand new destinations including China, Taiwan and a number of new ports in Malaysia such as Kuantan, Redang Island & Tioman Island will be visited by *Superstar Gemini* in addition to regular stops in the country.

“These new itineraries will appeal to the Australians who are constantly looking for new borders, new adventures & new destinations & we are thrilled to be able to showcase such exciting authentic destinations,” Star Cruises regional vice president Nicole Costantin said.

Superstar Virgo will be repositioned from Singapore to Hong Kong, making stops at Ho Chi Minh City and Nha Trang in Vietnam before beginning a series of operating three and six-night itineraries to Sanya, Halong Bay and ports in Taiwan.

Virgo will then move back to its long-term home port Singapore on 28 October 2014.

Earlybird fares are on sale until 28 Feb next year – see your travel agent for more details.

Norwegian shooting hoops

NORWEGIAN Cruise Lines has signed a new marketing agreement with the New York Knicks NBA basketball franchise.

The pact sees the line become the Official Cruise Line of the Knicks, with its logo and digital messages to appear on signage at the team’s Madison Square Garden home games.

It follows a similar deal with the NFL’s Miami Dolphins, based in another key NCL market.



Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY

<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	Tue 5 Nov
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	Wed 6 Nov
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Thu 7 Nov
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Fri 8 Nov
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	Fri 8 Nov
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Sat 9 Nov
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Sun 10 Nov
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Mon 11 Nov
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Mon 11 Nov

BRISBANE

<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Tue 5 Nov
<i>Sea Princess</i>	Fri 8 Nov
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Sat 9 Nov

MELBOURNE

<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	Thu 7 Nov
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FREMANTLE

<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Sat 9 Nov
<i>Volendam</i>	Sat 9 Nov

ADELAIDE

<i>Sea Princess</i>	Wed 6 Nov
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Sat 9 Nov

AUCKLAND

<i>Ocean Princess</i>	Sat 9 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Sun 10 Nov
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Mon 11 Nov

WELLINGTON

<i>Sun Princess</i>	Tue 5 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Wed 6 Nov
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Fri 8 Nov

TAURANGA

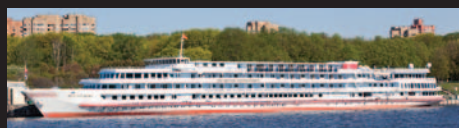
<i>Ocean Princess</i>	Fri 8 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Sat 9 Nov
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Sun 10 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Mon 11 Nov



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P&O makes historic return to PNG

Pacific Dawn has arrived in Papua New Guinea for the first of several dedicated cruises.

THE cruise line first visited Papua New Guinea in the 1930s, but P&O had much to celebrate yesterday with its maiden visit to Milne Bay capital Alotau.

Eighty years after P&O's mail steamer *Maloja* called on nearby Samurai Island, Brisbane-based *Pacific Dawn* made its inaugural call to the port on Monday morning.

Yesterday's visit was the first of six scheduled calls for the cruise line at Alotau over the coming 18 months.

The country's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, along with the Governor for the Milne Bay Province Titus Philemon, the ceo of PNG Ports Stanley Alphonse and the ceo of PNG Tourism Peter Vincent, joined P&O's Australian head and Carnival Australia chief executive officer

Ann Sherry to commemorate the company's "first dedicated cruise" to Papua New Guinea.

Sherry said the cruise line was thrilled to be offering roundtrips to "one of the most stunning regions in the world".

"Cruising really is the perfect way to explore Papua New Guinea's idyllic beaches and scenery and discover its ancient customs and history and I'm pleased to say that from next year, we'll also offer cruises from Sydney as well as Brisbane so more Australians can visit," she said.

Pacific Dawn will boost its operations to Papua New Guinea in November, offering a second cruise to the destination, while next year's season is set to include four cruises from both Brisbane and Sydney.

Scenic charters to Antarctica

COMPAGNIE du Ponant owned mega-yacht *Le Boreal* has been chartered by Scenic Tours for two cruises to Antarctica in 2015, slated to depart on 07 Feb and 17 Feb 2015.

The company tested the icy waters of the destination briefly last year, offering a voyage to the frozen continent aboard the 200-pax *Le Boreal* which sold out in three days as an exclusive sale to past Scenic Tours passengers.

A second charter aboard sister-ship *L'Austral* also sold out immediately, with a 2015 waiting list established catering to future demand.

"Antarctica is proving to be one of the most sought after destinations," Scenic Tours Antarctica product manager Louise Hill said.

"We had an absolutely extraordinary response to the introduction of our luxury private charter cruises last year".

Passengers booking on the new Scenic Tours Antarctica voyages are able to extend their trip by combining with a selection of South American itineraries - phone 1300 723 642.



HAVING now departed over the weekend for its new home in Miami, Florida, the *MSC Divina* last week started getting its crew ready for the customs, holidays and traditions recognised by their new American clients, hosting a multitude of Halloween-themed events onboard last week.

Staff also got into the act, recreating some of the most famous scenes from the most well-known horror movies in preparation for a wild Halloween horror costume party!

Prizes were given out to the best costume on board among the passengers, while special arts & crafts sessions were held to make a number of Halloween items to give to friends and family as souvenirs.

Kids were not left out, with a children's costume parade held in the theatre for all the little vampires, zombies and all the mini-monsters, limited only by their imaginations.

The spookiness wasn't limited to the *Divina*, with all ships at sea on 31 Oct also being decorated from bow to stern with black cats, pumpkins, witches, with haunting music playing over loudspeakers and ship bars serving a range of creepy, chilling cocktails and drinks (see right).



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Port Review: Sorrento, Italy

By Roger Condon

Sitting midway in the Mediterranean is Italy and in particular Sorrento, which anchors the northern end of the dramatic Amalfi Coast.

Sitting atop a sheer cliff above the Azure sea, arriving into Sorrento is very picturesque, so cameras at the ready! There's no docking facility here, so all ships anchor off-shore and you are tendered ashore. Once on land, there are distinctive orange and blue buses that will take you into town perched above (only € 1.50), or take the walk...it's not too bad.

Your biggest dilemma of the day is quite simply what to do, as there are so many choices. Turn left and you'll be invited to enter into the world of the Roman Empire, specifically that of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Both these cities were buried beneath the lava, mud and ash from the cataclysmic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Pompeii is the most famous, offering one of the finest glimpses into everyday Roman life, however many would suggest that although smaller, Herculaneum is the better site. Take a tour, as you need a guide to ignite your imagination here, or if you prefer independence, there is a train from Sorrento (take the orange bus).

Turn right, you'll be drawn into a world of incredible scenic beauty and Italian chic as you navigate the stunning Amalfi Coast drive to towns such as Positano, Amalfi & Ravello that seemingly appear to be cascading down, covered in bougainvillea, to the sea. Taxis can be hired on an hourly basis, although they're expensive and your ship will offer a tour. There's fine shopping, restaurants, and a rabbit warren of alleys to stroll in search of the perfect gelato, or hit one of the crowded beaches.

Back at the dock, you could take one of the fast ferries to the island Capri, once a playground for the Roman elite. Capri is crammed shoulder to shoulder with day visitors, but there's impressive shopping, splendid restaurants and awesome scenic vistas. Not forgetting Sorrento itself, discover alleyways teeming with shopping treasures offering souvenirs to higher end boutiques, and there are restaurants and cafes where you can grab pizza and pasta, or Caruso, my favourite.

Roger's Quick Tips

Best Months: May-Sep

Don't Miss: The Amalfi Drive

Tour or Not: Either, whichever is best value

Sightseeing: Pompeii, Herculaneum, Positano, Amalfi

Food: Gelato, Limoncello, Pizza (origin Naples), Buffalo Mozzarella

Language: Italian

Shopping: Ceramics, everything lemon, shoes

Cash or Card: Credit Card and Euro



Coastline of Capri

By **Roger Condon**, general manager - sales, Discover the World Marketing - with 15 years at sea.

South Australia season begins

THE first of 29 scheduled cruise ship visits for the 2013/14 season has occurred at the Port Adelaide Passenger Terminal last week with the arrival of Princess Cruises' *Dawn Princess*.

State tourism officials estimate that \$14.5m in visitor expenditure will be injected into the SA economy over the course of the season, which is expected to bring 67,000 passengers.

In addition to Adelaide, ships will also visit Kangaroo Island, Port Lincoln and Robe.

Cruising has been a growing industry in South Australia since 2007, which saw only eight ship visits - to 35 so far set for the 2014/15 season.

"Our goal to attract 30 ships and \$11 million in passenger expenditure by 2014 has already been exceeded and we are well on our way to our 2020 goal of attracting 43 ships and \$17 million in expenditure," SA Tourism Minister Leon Bignell said.

Half off Uniworld in Vietnam

DISCOUNTS of 50% on selected Vietnam river cruises are available via a new special from Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection.

Departures of the line's 15-day Timeless Wonders of Vietnam, Cambodia & the Mekong on 06, 20 and 24 August 2014 are on sale, priced from \$2,892 per person twin share.

Staterooms need to be booked before 31 December, unless sold out prior.

The itinerary includes a seven-night cruise aboard the 58-passenger French colonial vessel *River Orchid* and seven nights in deluxe hotels on a land tour.

For more information, phone 1300 780 231.

Voyager makes Darwin debut

ROYAL Caribbean International's *Voyager of the Seas* last Thursday made its inaugural visit to Darwin, its first Australian visit of the season.

Tourism NT acting chief executive officer Adam Coward said the vessel was the second of three booked to visit in a three-day period, with *Radiance of the Seas* visiting the next day.

"These ships are among 27 visiting our shores during the 2013-14 cruise season, and they bring with them a welcome boost for local tourism operators.

"They bring with them around 7,000 passengers and around 2500 crew, amounting to a big economic injection," Coward said.

"*Radiance* carries up to 2500 passengers and is served by 859 crew," he added.

Darwin Ports Corporation marked *Voyager's* maiden visit by making a special presentation to the ship's Captain shortly after docking.

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The quirkiest cruises of 2014

by: Louise Goldsbury

BORED of the same old itineraries? Seeking new experiences in the new year? Here's some curious cruises offering very different activities, destinations and vessels. Only the adventurous need apply.

Cargo ship to paradise

The *Aranui 3*, a cargo-cum-passenger ship, delivers supplies to the Marquesas Islands in the South Pacific. Up to 200 travellers can come along for the ride and enjoy shore excursions, such as jungle treks and tours of archaeological sites that include either a picnic or lunch at a local restaurant (included in the fare).

A 14-night cruise from Papeete, Tahiti, explores the Ua Pou mountains, the coral beaches of Rangiroa, and Hiva Oa, where Impressionist painter Paul Gauguin is buried. The 86-cabin ship has a pool, gym, restaurant and a program of lectures on Marquesan history, art and culture.

See www.aranui.com.

Tugboat adventure

Take a 12-passenger tugboat through British Columbia's Inside Passage for a cosy view of whales and dolphins. The 1941-built *MV Parry* has an open fire in the lounge and a galley serving lots of seafood. Excursions include hikes, clam-digging and bear-spotting. Six-night departures start May 2014 - more information at www.tugboatcruise.com.

Arctic Games

New Zealand's Heritage Expeditions has been invited to bring a group to the inaugural Beringian Arctic Games, where seven circumpolar nations compete in skin boat races. Other events include the mouth pull, knuckle hop, one-foot high-kick, musk ox push, kneel jump and snow snake.

Passenger participation in this voyage helps sponsor 25 school children to attend the Games.

This special itinerary starts in Nome, Alaska, on 17 July 2014 and ends in

Anadyr, a remote port in Chukotka, in the Russian Far East. More details at www.heritage-expeditions.com.

Cowboys and penguins

Cruceros Australis' Gauchos, Glaciers & Penguins tour combines these three things in one trip, from Punta Arenas, in Chile. Participants visit a King penguin colony and a South American cowboy ranch before boarding the *Stella Australis* or *Via Australis* for an epic voyage around Cape Horn, stopping to see glaciers and historic Wulaia Bay, where naturalist Charles Darwin landed in 1833. To top it off, this cruise takes place in the spectacular Tierra del Fuego region. Various dates are available - read more about it at www.australis.com.

Iceland circumnavigation

This journey through the Land of Fire and Ice travels aboard the *Island Sky*, by zodiac and on foot to Iceland's bubbling hot springs, volcanoes and waterfalls. The standout attraction is a snowmobile ride across Vatnajökull, Europe's largest glacier.

Commencing with a tour of Reykjavík, it is followed by visits to the fabled Golden Circle of Thingvellir National Park, Gullfoss Waterfall, and the Geysir Center. Departures are 24 June and 13 July 2014 - check out www.zeghram.com.

Swim with whale sharks

Coral Princess Cruises has a new Indonesian expedition between Darwin and Biak in West Papua (and vice versa) aboard the 72-passenger *Oceanic Discoverer*. Five nights are spent in Raja Ampat, considered the world's most bio-diverse marine region, which is fast becoming a hot spot for diving and snorkelling.

But the crazy part of the trip is an opportunity to swim with whale sharks in Cenderawasih Bay.

Visit www.coralprincess.com.au for more details.



Beringian Arctic Games



Freighter ship Aranui 3



Take a tugboat

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