



Lindblad faces “suspicious” crowd

At last night’s brochure launch, past passengers confronted the new owners about changes to the old Orion.

IT WASN’T the caged animals at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo that caused a commotion at Lindblad Expeditions’ launch of its new 120-page 2014 Explorations catalogue – it was loyal fans of the Australian ways of Orion

Expeditions Cruises.

After an inspiring presentation about the new exotic itineraries, diving program and undersea exploration tools, company founder Sven Lindblad, who flew in from New York, and his Sydney-based son Jeremy were forced to defend the changes to the *National Geographic Orion*.

Past passengers at the function took the opportunity to ask about the onboard currency, alterations to the ship’s theatre and retention of Australian expedition leaders.

Only one person in the crowd asked for further details about the new offerings.

Sven attempted to make light of the “suspicious” and “protectionist” theme of questions, assuring the audience that “we’ll take any money you want to give us” and there were no plans to replace the theatre with more cabins, before inviting one of the Australian crew to front the stage.

All enhancements were “way better”, he said. “We wouldn’t be adding things if they didn’t add value, if our guests weren’t going to love it”.

Travel agents, also at the event, told *Cruise Weekly* it had been “an unhappy marriage” and “too much of a contrast” between the adventure specialists Lindblad Expeditions and the more upmarket Orion Expeditions Cruises, but they all agreed it was too soon to be negative.

Speaking to *CW*, Sven said he was “optimistic as hell” that Australians would embrace the expanded exposure to expeditions in to “extraordinary geographies” never before directly offered to this market, while Jeremy, the recently appointed business development director for Australia, emphasised that the general response was “unbelievably positive”.

Sven said he was confident of success in the local market, with more than 40 itineraries on 10 well-equipped ships in seven continents.

“We have 98% occupancy across 10 ships and we’ll have 98% occupancy on this ship”.

“No matter what, we are staying in this region” - more from Lindblad on **page four**.

Call out for cruise exhibitors

ORGANISERS of next year’s Travel Industry Exhibition are inviting cruise lines large and small to exhibit their wares to B2B buyers.

The business trade show is scheduled to take place from 18-19 Jul in Sydney, with the event shaping as one of the biggest on the 2014 industry calendar - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Double river cruise christening

AVALON Waterways has provided *CW* with an exclusive sneak peek into the upcoming debut of its next two river vessels.

On 22 Mar next year, the company will host a special dual christening of *Avalon Poetry II* and *Avalon Impression* in Dordrecht, Holland.

The godmother of *Poetry II* will be Dr Katherine Grainger CBE, British Olympic rowing gold medallist and six-times world champion, while *Impression’s* godmother is J.Mara DelliPriscoli, founder of Educational Travel Community and president and founder of Travel Learning Connections.

As announced in Jun, Avalon Waterways will launch *Avalon Illumination* with Australian godmother Deborah Hutton in Vienna.

Allure dry dock forthcoming?

PROPULSION problems have forced Royal Caribbean International to consider putting the world’s largest cruise ship *Allure of the Seas* in for dry dock maintenance ahead of schedule.

The vessel has been continuing on its regular week-long Caribbean itineraries with a slight power issue, with the resulting slower speeds necessitating a shorter stop in Nassau, Bahamas and a late arrival at St Thomas.

Allure, which debuted in 2010, wasn’t due for routine works until 2015, however chairman Richard D Fain said it may now swap a drydock slot in 2014 with sister-ship *Oasis of the Seas* now being pushed back to 2015.

CW packed with the news

Today’s trade issue of *CW* features five pages of all the latest cruise information plus a full page from **Blue Lagoon Cruises**.

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Cruise News & Views...

Brett Jardine - General Manager

Space ratio

DOES the size of a ship really matter and how are they actually measured? As with most things in life the importance of such an issue is always personal.

A small boutique vessel providing an intimate cruise experience is preferred by some but for others, a large floating resort with loads of activities is a better option.

Ships are measured by their Gross Registered Tonnage or GRT. On one hand you may think the GRT of any vessel is not a factor when discussing options with your clients however, read on.

The GRT is not actually the physical weight of a ship - it indicates the total enclosed volume.

Once you are armed with the GRT of a ship, your next mission is to find the passenger capacity. Capacity is measured based on two persons in each cabin despite the fact that a ship can actually carry more passengers than what the capacity indicates based on triple and quad share cabins.

Once you have the GRT and the capacity of a ship, you have the ability to really show off to your clients by giving them the passenger to space ratio of the ship they are traveling on. The passenger to space ratio is simply the GRT divided by the passenger capacity.

For example, a ship with a GRT of 70,000 that can carry 2,000 guests has a passenger to space ratio of 35. You guessed it - the higher the number you come up with, the more "elbow room" per passenger on board.

As a general rule, a passenger to space ratio of less than 10 is cramped, 10 to 20 is still quite confined, 20 to 30 is OK, 30 to 50 is quite spacious and 50+ is the ultimate!

Industry provides typhoon relief

Cruise lines worldwide, including RCCL, NCL, Carnival, Crystal and Paul Gauguin Cruises, have contributed more than \$2,237,500 to the Philippines.

FILIPINO crew, who make up the majority of workers on most cruise ships across the world's oceans, have received extensive assistance from employers, while large donations have also been pledged by several major cruise lines.

P&O Cruises Australia was quick to step up with AU\$50,000 to Save The Children for its efforts in the region and called on the Australian public, through its Facebook page, to make their own donations.

"Beyond the financial support, all of us at Carnival Australia continue to keep our Filipino crew members and their loved ones back in the Philippines in our thoughts at this tragic time & we know our passengers are doing the same," Carnival Australia ceo Ann Sherry said.

The next day Carnival Corporation announced that it has combined with American NBA basketball team, the Miami HEAT to pledge

at least US\$1 million to support relief in communities affected by the natural disaster.

Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd also said its efforts to help the people of the Philippines would total US\$1 million.

"More than 12,800 of our employees call the Philippines home," said Richard Fain, RCCL chairman and ceo.

"We want to do everything we can to help them, their families, and their neighbours heal from this terrible tragedy."

The company will also match employees' contributions to World Vision dollar-for-dollar.

Additionally, RCCL has collaborated with its local manning agency, Philippine Transmarine Carriers, to assess the storm's impact on crew members and their families and to deploy an emergency team to the hardest-hit areas.

Costa Cruises has promised US\$100,000, while Norwegian Cruise Line has set up a relief fund, but was only accepting donations by cheque.

The Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation (CICF) today also announced it is providing a \$100,000 donation to the American Red Cross.

Other lines have made undisclosed donations and all are providing Filipino crew members with free phone calls and internet.

Free flights to Burma on offer

TRAVELMARVEL is offering free flights for one person with every couple booking any of its new Burma holidays on all departures between Sep 2014 and Mar 2015.

Eligible tours include the 10-day Charming Burma, which visits Yangon, Inle Lake, Bagan & Mandalay and features a stay at the Pristine Lotus Spa Resort, a bamboo forest dinner and can be combined with another 12-day itinerary to form a 22-day holiday - book by 31 Mar and for more information, phone 1300 300 036.

RCI's Quantum virtual-ly ready

DESIGNERS of Royal Caribbean International's highly-anticipated *Quantum of the Seas* megaliners are using virtual reality technology to help perfect the ship's architectural design.

Under construction at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany, the latest video update on the progress of the ship's design has been released, showing how the innovations are well underway long before the ship is floated.

To view the latest RCI video, **CLICK HERE**.



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Super Mario joins Norwegian

GAMING giant Nintendo will expand its existing alliance with Norwegian Cruise Lines to provide Nintendo Wii entertainment across the line's entire fleet.

Consoles will be installed in ship atriums as well as in onboard youth and teen clubs, with video game competitions to also take place.

The expansion follows a similar partnership recently signed between Celebrity Cruises and Microsoft to offer Xbox video game experiences at sea (**CW** 09 May).

Submissions for Cayman pier

LONG-MOOTED plans for the construction of permanent cruise ship berths in Grand Cayman have taken a step forward after the island nation's government released a detailed plan outline for public review.

The prospectus stated that for a terminal to be realised, investment or direct involvement must come from Carnival Cruise Lines, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines or another major line.

A study by business consultancy group PricewaterhouseCoopers valued a cruise port in Grand Cayman at up to US\$200m, but capable of bringing significant tourism revenue and boost to local employment.

Cruise development in home

INNOVATIVE cruise sales technology developed by Cruise1st will be implemented across the home-based TravelManagers network for agents keen to improve industry knowledge and individual cruise sales figures.

Dubbed "Cruise Fusion", the system was announced at last week's TravelManagers 2013 conference aboard a two-night cruise to nowhere on Royal Caribbean International's Australian-based liner *Voyager of the Seas*.

The new Cruise Fusion training syllabus will be separate to the individual CruiseManagers division launched last year as it is aimed at the remainder of the TM network who do not currently meet strict qualification criteria.

Introductory and Intermediate online training courses will be rolled out across the network to promote the value of a cruising holiday and deliver sales techniques to convert more cruise enquiries into firm sales.

"What is really critical for us as a group is to maximise the potential of the individual Personal Travel Managers and their capability in selling a cruise so this is really a focus on improving their credentials and building their knowledge and skill set in that particular field," TravelManagers gm Michael Gazal told **CW**.

P&O postpones Azura drydock

THREE new cruises have been added to the 2014 schedule of P&O Cruises World Cruising *Azura*, after the line elected to delay previously scheduled dry dock maintenance works, which have been moved to 2015.

The new cruises all depart Southampton in Oct and range from a two-night short break to also include a six-night sailing and a 10-night Atlantic and Iberian coast voyage.

Spanish port wharf expansion

THE Bilbao Port Authority will invest €13.5m in a new 354m long pier capable of facilitating up to three ships simultaneously once finished.

The new infrastructure is in response to a rapid growth in cruise ship arrivals and interest from new ships visiting on completion in May.

Divina adds new ports-of-call

MSC Cruises has added four new ports which will form part of winter 2014-15 cruises in the Caribbean for *MSC Divina*, which will next week begin life from its new Florida home.

The new schedule additions include Puerto Limon, Costa Rica; Cartagena, Colombia; Cristobal, Panama and Costa Maya, Mexico.

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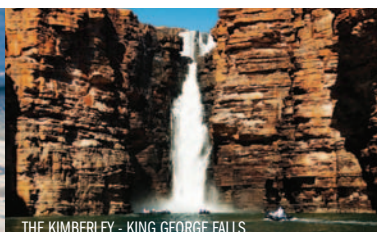
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Lindblad Expeditions goes big-cat feeding

GETTING back to nature is one of the core principles of the Lindblad Expeditions business.

Company founder Sven Lindblad yesterday joined his Sydney-based son Jeremy to escort special guests and media to a tiger-feeding experience at Taronga Zoo.

Guests roamed the tiger enclosure while the animals were in their night dens, placing items of food & entertainment in hiding places before scurrying out as the tigers were again released.

The up-close experience with wildlife mirrors those readily available by passengers on any of the company's ten ships operating in seven continents and 45 destinations worldwide, who have opportunities to view wildlife in their most natural of habitats from close distance.

Expedition elements including more kayaks, zodiacs, and remotely operated underwater vehicles are currently being installed on to the line's newest ship, which will be renamed the *National Geographic Orion* in Mar next year.

New business development director Australia Jeremy Lindblad told *Cruise Weekly* the many new enhancements will add value to the ship.

"Australia is the Orion's home because she's born out of Australia.

"She'll continue to be based here and have operations here for that particular reason because we believe in this market," he added.

Nine departures in the Kimberley region will be operated by the *National Geographic Orion* next year, according to the newly released 2014 Explorations brochure (see **page one**).

Lindblad added he is greatly looking forward to working closely with travel agents across



Australia to showcase the Lindblad experience.

"For agents, we're a one-stop shop for expedition cruising - you don't have to dabble with five different companies.

"With the Explorations catalogue, you get to see 45 different itineraries that all have a similar theme which is expedition travel so hopefully we can be a good outlet to find what is exciting for expedition travellers," he added.

Jeremy Lindblad is **pictured** above left with his father and company founder Sven setting up food for the tigers at Sydney's Taronga Zoo.

Astor caters to kids activities

A RANGE of Kids Club activities have been announced for Cruise & Maritime Voyages' *Astor*, which has now departed Italy bound for its southern summertime home in Fremantle.

Whilst not a dedicated room or area for kids, a variety of sessions designed for children aged between 4 and 12 will be available at set hours each day, run by qualified staff.

Daily programs will be developed, which will be flexible depending on the ages of the children attending & utilising parts of the ship not being used, such as conference rooms.

Small fire on Dawn Princess

PASSENGERS aboard Princess Cruises' *Dawn Princess* were briefly mustered to emergency stations as a precaution following a small fire which broke out on an electrical sub-station located on Deck 6 of the vessel late last week.

Crew members attended to the fire, which occurred while the ship was enroute between Wellington and Napier, New Zealand.

No injuries were reported among passengers or crew, with the fire quickly extinguished and the voyage continuing uninterrupted.



LOOTING sunk to new depths late last week, quite literally, after four men were arrested in Italy "hunting for souvenirs" amid the wreckage of the *Costa Concordia*.

The unnamed men, one each from England & Ireland and two from South Africa were all employed by Titan - the company hired to salvage the hull of the upturned ship and prepare it to be towed and scrapped.

After spotting the bandits at 1:30am on CCTV cameras positioned around the ship, Italian police charged the men with theft and violating a crime scene before being released on bail.

In their possession was a *Costa Concordia* backpack with nothing in it at the time.

Titan has confirmed it has dismissed the four men from their employment.

Concordia has been a target for thieves before, with the ship's iconic bell engraved with its name stolen by divers three months after the ship capsized in Jan last year.

Ponant to sail South America

FRENCH cruise line Compagnie du Ponant has launched ten cruise itineraries to South America for the upcoming northern winter.

Voyages range in duration up to 46 days, with the highlighted itinerary being a 14-night sailing from Recife, Brazil to Cayenne, French Guyana.

Other ports to be visited include Montevideo, Ilhabela, Paraty, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Fort de France, Valparaiso, as well as several ports in Central America and Panama Canal transits.

US sport teams prove popular

CELEBRITY Cruises has become the latest line to partner with a major US sports franchise, signing a partnership with the New York Rangers Major League Hockey team.

The deal sees Celebrity become the Official Cruise Line of the Rangers, with the deal seeing promotional material for the line displayed at home matches in Madison Square Garden.

Additionally, a special seven-night hockey fan cruise featuring former Rangers players will sail to Bermuda, departing Bayonne, NJ on 03 Aug.

The latest agreement follows similar US sport deals by Carnival Corporation and Norwegian Cruise Lines in Miami and New Orleans.

Irish Ferries increase capacity

NEW daily frequencies on the high-traffic route between Holyhead and Dublin will be introduced by Irish Ferries once the operator takes delivery of a third ship on a charter basis.

Eight sailings per day will be progressively increased to 12, with additional capacity plied by the recently built freight and tourism ship *Epsilon*, which will join the company's flagship *Ulysses* and high-speed vessel *Jonathan Swift*.

Irish Ferries said it is also looking into using the additional capacity to boost services between Ireland and France.



Face to Face: Patrick Clark Managing Director, Avalon Waterways

Welcome to Face to Face, where we chat to cruise industry leaders.

What is the key to your success?

I've been a long distance runner for years, learning that endurance & the ability to continue through difficult times are important if you hope to complete the journey. I attribute these disciplines the success I've had in my business life.

What is your favourite destination, and why?

In Asia, the Mekong River, Vietnam and Cambodia still early in their tourism development so the area is relatively unspoiled. The sights, culture, food and people are fascinating. In Europe it would be France. Cruising the Rhone River through Burgundy and Provence is spectacular. You have the wonderful wines and food, Roman architectural influence and the cities where renaissance artists like Van Gogh were inspired to create masterpieces.

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

One evening I had dinner with a couple from New Zealand. He was a successful farmer, and told me that he and his wife were going to Istanbul following the cruise to visit his grandfather's grave site in Gallipoli. He had brought with him several stones from his property and was planning to place them on his grandfather's gravestone in memory of his sacrifice. I thought that was pretty special.

How do you spend days at sea?

The cool thing is there are no days at sea on the river. Every day you enjoy an included excursion off the ship. The ships dock in small towns and villages along legendary Europe rivers where you are steps away from local sights, cafes or shops. Passengers view the magnificent scenery from the sun-deck enjoying their favorite beverage when cruising between ports.

What makes Australians/New Zealanders different to other cruise passengers?

As a rule they are more experienced travellers, often having been on overseas holidays multiple times. When they journey to the Northern Hemisphere, the trip is likely to be 2-3 weeks at a minimum just to amortize the airfare. As a result, Australians and New Zealanders are the majority of passengers on all Avalon Cruises of two weeks or longer. We have also occasionally experienced an increase in the consumption of beer and wine on those cruises.

What is your best tip for sea-sickness?

A river cruise! In the 10 years with Avalon, I have not heard of one case of a passenger on a river cruise becoming "sea sick".

What is your prediction for the future of cruising?

River cruising is the fastest growing travel style. Ocean cruising has been a big factor, exposing guests to the benefit of one unpacking and your hotel room floating with you. River cruising allows you the same benefit but cruising in an intimate small ship, through a country experiencing the culture, history, people and food of so many different places. It is all inclusive and represents value for the money. Demographics in all the English speaking markets where Avalon is represented are very much on our side and will contribute to the future growth.



Patrick's Cruise Favourites!

Ship: *Avalon Expression*, our newest suite ship.

Ship Activity: Enjoying an early morning Lavazza coffee from the espresso machine in the Club lounge.

Shore Excursion: Visit to the Vinoteque in Bernkastel, Germany for a Moselle wine tasting.

Region: Burgundy and Provence river cruise in the South of France.

Port: Paris, the ship docks a 15 minute walk from the Eiffel Tower.

Onboard Food and Drink: Panorama Bistro, small plates of Pan-European dishes served with complimentary wines.

Perk of the Job: Attending all the ship christenings.

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