

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 19 November 2013

## US winter cruise season heats up

This week sees the inaugural voyage of *Carnival Sunshine* from New Orleans and the arrival of *MSC Divina* in Miami.

**THE** renamed *Carnival Sunshine*, formerly the Mediterranean-based *Carnival Destiny*, sets sail today from its new homeport of New Orleans, kicking off a winter program in the Caribbean.

Its first itinerary since a US\$155-million transformation in May, the 3,006-passenger ship is heading for Cozumel & Grand Cayman.

*Carnival Sunshine* is the largest Carnival Cruise Lines ship ever to be based in the city and will offer passengers a wide array of new bars and restaurants, a three-level Serenity adults-only retreat, an outdoor ropes course and the fleet's longest corkscrew water slide.

*Carnival Sunshine* was officially named yesterday by godmother Lin Arison, wife of the late Ted Arison, founder of CCL (**CW** 08 Aug).

Also due to make its maiden call and North American debut today is the *MSC Divina* in Miami.

In an industry first, four Fiat 500 watercrafts will travel the PortMiami channel, escorting the 139,400-tonne ship to her new home.

The 4,345-passenger *Divina* will be the first MSC Cruises vessel to offer year-round Caribbean sailings and the first of the fleet's Fantasia class vessels to operate from the United States.

The ship offers several firsts in the Caribbean, including its ship-within-a-ship, MSC Yacht Club, two new Eataly restaurants and artisanal marketplace, the first Aqua-cycling classes at sea, and the Aurea Spa.

Norwegian Cruise Line has six ships based in four ports for its US winter 2013/14 deployment.

*Norwegian Jewel* made her debut in New Orleans on 13 Oct offering Western Caribbean itineraries, and the line also plans to return to the Mexican Riviera from Los Angeles, with *Norwegian Star* sailing seven-day cruises in December, March and April, along with a series of Panama Canal voyages between Los Angeles and Miami.

From Jan 2014, *Norwegian Getaway* will be based out of Miami for a series of Eastern Caribbean Cruises, replacing the *Norwegian Epic*, which will operate Western Caribbean Cruises from Miami.

NCL will also continue its commitment to Canada and New England with two ships sailing to the region: *Norwegian Gem* from New York and *Norwegian Dawn* from Boston and Quebec.

### New Gallipoli Centenary cruise

**BATTLEFIELD** Memorial Travel has released a 28-night Gallipoli Centenary departure which will include an onboard dawn service off the Anzac Cove coast on 25 Apr 2015.

The sailing will depart from Southampton, UK on 12 Apr 2015 aboard Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' *Black Watch*, with bookings deposited by 30 Nov upgraded to an all-inclusive drinks package valued at \$700 per person.

Passengers will have three days in Gallipoli and will also visit Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, France, Malta and Portugal and more, with cabins on the voyage priced from \$5,995ppts.

### Royal Flush specials extended

**POPULAR** demand has seen Royal Caribbean extend the sales deadline for its latest Royal Flush sale until this Saturday 23 November.

Valid on cruises departing between January 2014 and April 2015, passengers can take advantage of deals including reduced fares, half price deposits and onboard credits of up to \$400 per stateroom for cruises up to 12 days in duration in balcony cabins or suites.

For more details, phone 1800 754 500.



### Cruise Calendar

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

#### SYDNEY

<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Tue 19 Nov
<i>Celebrity Millennium</i>	Wed 20 Nov
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Thu 21 Nov
<i>Volendam</i>	Sat 23 Nov
<i>Voyager of The Seas</i>	Sat 23 Nov
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	Sun 24 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Sun 24 Nov
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Mon 25 Nov

#### MELBOURNE

<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Tue 19 Nov
<i>Volendam</i>	Wed 20 Nov
<i>Oosterdam</i>	Fri 22 Nov

#### BRISBANE

<i>Sun Princess</i>	Tue 19 Nov
<i>Sea Princess</i>	Fri 22 Nov
<i>Celebrity Millennium</i>	Sat 23 Nov

#### CAIRNS

<i>Caledonian Sky</i>	Thu 21 Nov
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Sat 23 Nov

#### HOBART

<i>Oosterdam</i>	Wed 20 Nov
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#### BURNIE

<i>Volendam</i>	Thu 21 Nov
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#### AUCKLAND

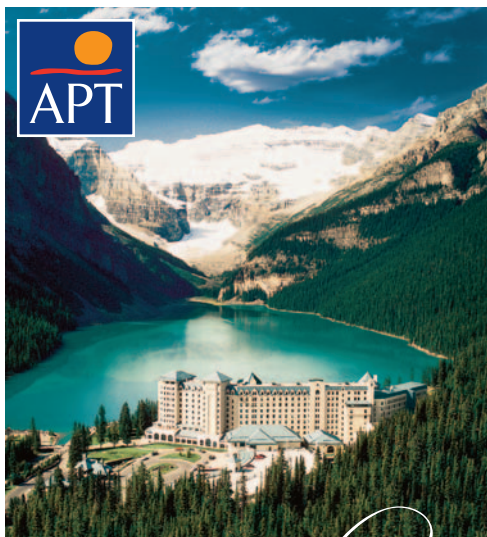
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Sat 23 Nov
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Mon 25 Nov

#### WELLINGTON

<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Wed 20 Nov
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	Wed 20 Nov
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Fri 22 Nov

#### TAURANGA

<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Sun 24 Nov
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## Crew Profile

This week **Cruise Weekly** speaks with **Rik Sprengers, Cruise Manager** onboard **Uniworld's** Rhine, Main & Danube cruises.

**How long have you been working on river cruise ships? When did you join Uniworld?**

I started in 2003 & I'm about to start my 11th season.

**What is the best thing about working for Uniworld?**

The people. From the office staff to the staff onboard - all are so dedicated. Many have been working for Uniworld season after season so it's like a big family full of great people.

**What is your favourite cruising destination?**

I love the Tulip & Windmill Cruises in spring. I'm able to show off my home country when it's at its most beautiful. I also love sailing on the *River Queen* along the Moselle and Rhine.

**Briefly explain what the job entails.**

I make sure the program is running smoothly and take care of guests. Confirming buses, tour guides, writing daily programs, daily talks, making sure we deliver what we promise and helping with individual guest requests or medical help if necessary, are some of my tasks.

**Who is the most famous person you've ever served?**

The son of President Ronald Reagan, Michael was on board with his wife. He was very charismatic and kind. He shared some great stories about his Dad's time in the White House.

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

To make the Icelandic volcano stop from erupting, so the guest could go home and see her newborn grandchild.

**Do you have any embarrassing cruise stories you can share with us?**

A guest was carrying her passport in a money belt; she didn't want to put it in the safe. She got dressed up for the Captain's Farewell Cocktail and Dinner and thought the money belt didn't look nice underneath her dress so she decided to take it off and put it in the bin in her cabin. When she returned, her bins had been emptied. A team of housekeeping, the Hotel Manager & I searched the bins for 35 mins until we found the money belt and returned it to her.

**How do you spend your holidays when you return home?**

Mostly relaxing at home in the Netherlands. I love to cook and bake, especially when my family and friends come over!



## Lindblad releases full 2014 program

A new program with Australian Geographic and more diverse expeditions are on the way next year.

**THE** founder of Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic arrived in Sydney last week to launch the company's 120-page Explorations brochure to its burgeoning market of Australian passengers.

Sven Lindblad was keen to introduce the 40 itineraries to be explored next year by the recently acquired *Orion* as well as the line's other nine expedition-style ships.

"When we bought *Orion*, I wasn't excited to buy the ship, I was excited about getting involved with *Orion* the company because that got us involved with Australia and bringing Australians to different parts of the world," he said to the crowd of past passengers and travel agents at Taronga Zoo.

Lindblad also revealed he had met with the Australian Geographical Society to work together on new programs, "but nothing is official yet".

Other highlights of the 2014 program include itineraries ranging from seven to 24 nights in Arctic Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Antarctica, Panama, Costa Rica, Galapagos, Northwest Passage, Borneo, Alaska, the upper reaches of the Amazon River, the South Pacific and Australia.

While some people in the audience questioned changes to be made to the original *Orion*, Lindblad remained confident that passengers would love the revamped and renamed *National Geographic Orion*.

Also at the event was Jeremy Lindblad, the recently appointed business development director for Australia, who told **Cruise Weekly** the overall response had been "unbelievably positive".

## Diadema maiden water touch

**COSTA** Cruises floated out the *Costa Diadema*, the biggest ship ever built in Italy, in Venice on Friday.

The 132,500-tonne, 4,947-passenger *Diadema* is due to enter service in Oct 2014.

Meanwhile, *Cruise Business Online* reports the *Costa Voyager* is up for sale.

The line's smallest ship is reportedly to be sold as part of Costa Crociere's three-part strategy to introduce new ships, upgrade existing ships and dispose of the oldest vessels.

"The ship is not the number-one thing that we do; the number-one thing that we do is provide unbelievable experiences around the world," he said.

*National Geographic Orion* will be christened in Auckland on 21 March 2014 by marine conservationist and underwater filmmaker Valerie Taylor before the 100-passenger ship weighs anchor for an inaugural 21-night cruise to Cairns via Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

Its other destinations include the Spice Islands and the Coral Triangle, followed by nine Kimberley Coast cruises between May and August, before sailing from Broome to Bali and operating in Indonesia, Tahiti, Spice Islands, Easter Island and Antarctica.

To obtain a copy of the brochure, phone (02) 9033 8777 (Sydney), 1300 361 012 (regional and interstate), 0800 444 462 (New Zealand) or see your travel agent.

## Media expansion for Silversea

**HUNDREDS** of daily lifestyle magazines and newspapers from around the world will be added to the range of onboard media options for passengers to download to their own devices on two Silversea Cruises vessels.

Guests on *Silver Cloud* and *Silver Galapagos* now have access to the expanded range, which is updated nightly to ensure the latest editions are made available.

The increased range of titles is in addition to the existing selection of movies and live television channels guests may also stream to their own tablets and smartphones onboard.

Publications from 100 countries and in 56 languages now make up the range of onboard reading available to Silversea Cruises guests.

The expanded service will be rolled out to *Silver Shadow* from the end of this month, as well as *Silver Wind* and *Silver Whisper* later in the year.

## Cruising with a literary master

**RENOWNED** Australian writer Thomas Keneally will conduct readings and talk about his newest book releases as the host of a special river cruise through Europe next year.

The sailing will depart on 16 Jul and travel from Amsterdam to Budapest aboard Avalon Waterways' new ship *Avalon Impression*, which will be formally christened in Mar next year.

Suites aboard the cruise are priced from \$7,459ppts - more info on (02) 8252 8777.



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## Cruise Guru frock up for a day at the races

**STAFF** from cruise industry specialist travel agent Cruise Guru joined with P&O Cruises to sponsor one of the events at the Spring Racing Carnival at Royal Randwick Racecourse.

In a closely fought contest which had punters cheering their bets home, it was Capital Commander who took out the event by little more than a nose.

**Pictured** above looking resplendent in their classy racewear with

the owners of Capital Commander is Leighton Schembri, Karen Kerr, Kate Foster, Serisha Sewgambar & Jessica Sindoni from Cruise Guru and Jess O'Brien from P&O Cruises.



## US woman jumps off Princess

**NO SIGNS** have been reported of a woman who appeared to intentionally jump from the *Grand Princess* at 4pm Friday Hawaii time.

The Princess Cruises vessel was approx 1050kms north of Hilo, Hawaii when the 54-year old female passenger appeared to climb the railing and intentionally jump overboard, according closed circuit security video.

Despite the efforts of the ship, which changed its course in an attempt to search, and those of a US Coast Guard plane, the woman is now presumed dead.

## Allure early drydock confirmed

**ROYAL** Caribbean International president and chief executive officer Adam Goldstein has confirmed *Allure of the Seas* will enter early drydock for maintenance work to correct an unanticipated level of bearing wear in one of the ship's three propulsion motors.

*Allure of the Seas* operates well-long departures to the Caribbean, with the early work forcing the cancellation of one departure on 23 Feb 2014.

Apologising for the unforeseen cancellation, Goldstein said the decision to put the world's largest passenger cruise ship in for repair work ahead of schedule was not taken lightly, but that "it was very important to us that we bring *Allure* back up to speed so that she could continue to deliver the amazing cruise holidays our guests expect".

## Pier expansion in Puerto Rico

**CRUISE** ships with capacity of up to 6,000 passengers will be able to call at the Old San Juan port in Puerto Rico as a result of a wharf expansion in the works by the US territory's Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla.

As part of a US\$8.7 million project, the pier will be extended by 55 metres and will see a new baggage inspection office constructed.

Royal Caribbean International's new *Quantum of the Seas* vessel is scheduled to visit San Juan for the first of nine visits in December next year.

## Uniworld cuts half from Italy

**SAVINGS** of up to 50% are available on selected 2014 departures of two Uniworld itineraries in Italy.

On sale until 31 Dec, the 13-day Splendours of Northern Italy, Venice, Florence and Rome tour travel from Venice to the Italian capital city and is priced from \$4,200pp twin share for departures in July and August next year - a saving of \$4,250 per person.

The eight-day Venice & the Gems of Northern Italy itinerary is priced from \$2,250pp twin share - a price drop of \$2,350 per person.

For more details, see your travel agent.

## Two-for-one on Hurtigruten

**SELECTED** voyages over the Christmas period are on sale in a two-for-the-price-of-one deal from Hurtigruten.

Departures on *MS Polarlys* and *MS Midnatsol* in various parts of Norway are priced from £49 per person per night inclusive of full board.

A number of Christmas celebrations will be held for pax both onboard and in local towns.



**AMERICA'S** NFL Superbowl is a fabulous time of year when the halftime show and the wondrous array of commercials often try to take centre stage over the football game.

Set to be held next February at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium, just outside of New York, companies far and wide are well and truly planning their corporate and promotional assault on America's public, with Norwegian Cruise Lines no exception.

According to *USA Today*, the line's newest ship as of that point - the 4,028 passenger *Norwegian Getaway* - will be turned into a floating hotel and entertainment venue for a few days leading up to and during the game, courtesy of Anheuser Busch, and themed as the Bud Light Floating Hotel.

The ship will be open for lodging bookings from the Thursday prior to the game until the Monday morning afterwards, with Bud Light decals to be plastered throughout cabins and all onboard items including pillows, hand towels and shampoo bottles.

In addition to a host of special events taking place onboard during the four-day party, Bud Light will also have its logos plastered on the surrounding dock and pier.

## Disney cruise ships go home

**ALL** four ships in the Disney Cruise Lines fleet will be based in Florida in the first four months of 2015, the line has announced.

*Disney Magic*, *Dream* and *Fantasy* will all home port from Port Canaveral, with *Disney Wonder* operating from Miami.

Bookings for the season, which will see each vessel operate in various sections of the Caribbean, have now opened.

## Aquarius welcomed to Brunei

**GLITTERING** welcoming ceremonies were on hand in Brunei last week, with Brunei Tourism on hand to celebrate the inaugural arrival of Star Cruises' *Superstar Aquarius* liner.

Brunei will be a regular stop for the vessel as part of its current homeport deployment to Kota Kinabalu through until March next year, from where it will operate a season of three-night packages to the city, with officials confident of a boost to tourism development.

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## Ship Review: Blue Lagoon Cruises' *Fiji Princess*

by: Roderick Eime

### VITAL STATISTICS

Passengers: 68 in 34 twin cabins on 3 decks (72 maximum)  
Built: 2000, in France

**Demographic:** Typically mature, active couples and groups but equally suitable for younger couples and even families.

**Facilities:** Single-sitting dining saloon, sky deck bar and saloon bar, lounges, boutique, Senikai Spa, pool, exerc-cycles, four sun decks, coffee machine, glass bottom boat, free wi-fi (where reception allows) and guest laundry.

**Itineraries:** Blue Lagoon Cruises offers 3, 4 and 7-night cruises from Port Denarau into the nearby Yasawa Island chain as well as Modriki and the Sacred Islands. Occasionally, special 'history and culture' cruises are offered to the Lau Islands, Ovalau and Taveuni. Sign up to the mailing list to be advised of these special itineraries.

**Cabins:** Cabins are small compared to modern, large ships and range from 11 to 13 sqm. Facilities are straightforward with private facilities and in-cabin TV playing movies on rotation.

**Food:** From experience, the dining is hearty and generous with meats, fish, chicken, local vegetables and fruits. There are speciality nights too with curry and roasts but nothing is lavish or formal. Breakfasts are basic buffet with emphasis on fruits and cold items.

**Service:** Expect a relaxed pace here too. No one is going to come running if you snap your fingers, but everything is just a polite request away. The Fijians are a proud people, yet famously relaxed and ready with a smile, so going with the flow is important. Don't get agitated if things don't go absolutely to plan, it's part of the Pacific lifestyle.

**Tipping:** Not required, but there is a box provided for those who wish

to reward extraordinary service.

**Entertainment:** This is delightfully ad hoc with crew members producing guitars and traditional instruments to sing local and popular songs. Audience participation is encouraged and always great fun.

**Excursions:** Village visits and island hikes make up the excursion component, but there is plenty to do that includes kayaking, snorkeling, swimming, local crafts like basket weaving, coconut husking (true!) and fishing. Fijians love fishing, so any excuse is always a good one. Scuba diving is outsourced on the Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands but well worth the effort. Scuba is easy and comfortable in the warm waters and reef shark and manta ray encounters are common. For non-divers, there is a glass bottom boat for reef and fish viewing.

**Dress code:** Resort casual and very relaxed. A nice shirt for men and a blouse for ladies is perfect for the most formal event, the Captain's Dinner. Hats are important for the strong sun, as are sunglasses. Ladies should dress modestly for village visits and men should wear sleeves.

**Who would love it:** This really is a cruise for anyone, especially those who like to get away from the crowds. Young and older alike can enjoy water sports, swimming, hikes, kayaking and cultural encounters. Progressive families will enjoy the freedom of a true tropical island experience with educational and experiential components.

**Who would hate it:** Those who insist on punctual, structured activities and formality will likely feel awkward in this ultra laid back setting. Likewise with poseurs and six-star luxury snobs. If you can't kick back & relax on a Blue Lagoon Cruise then you are in serious need of therapy.



Plenty to do during the days



Elegant yet informal dining



Idyllic settings for guests to enjoy

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