



OPT upgrade to minimise disruptions

Sydney's leading restaurants and bars are working with planners for a solution to the strained operations at the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

The award-winning Quay, Wildfire, Ocean Room, Peter Doyle and Cruise Bar are in negotiations about the impact of the upcoming upgrade of Australia's busiest port, a project that will run alongside the major wharf extension to accommodate some of the world's biggest ships.

A source involved in the planning, who preferred to remain anonymous, told **CW** this

morning that all OPT tenants were involved in discussions to ensure the construction works had minimal impact on businesses.

It is understood some tenants may "come to an agreement" to leave, but negotiations are underway.

Wildfire and Ocean Room are the most likely to be affected as these properties occupy prime space that could potentially be used to increase cargo handling.

Anthony Tam, general manager of Ocean Room, told **Cruise Weekly** he had "no concerns" about disruptions or loss of tenancy.

"We believe we will be trading as usual, we are always kept updated about plans," he said.

Tam emphasised that tenants needed to be flexible in a building purpose-built for liners.

"We understand this is a cruise terminal, so we deal with whatever is happening.

"We have been here for nine years so any problems have already been addressed."

Sydney Ports is expected to hold broader stakeholder discussions before the end of the year as part of the upgrade's EIS process, with further details soon to be revealed about improved passenger amenities and a possible expansion of the terminal's upper deck.

Captain's Club enhancements

CELEBRITY Cruises has rolled out a raft of changes to its Captain's Club frequent cruisers loyalty program based on guest feedback.

Among the biggest of the changes is the introduction of two new status levels at the top end of the program, which come with further bonuses, benefits and rewards.

Already underway with its local 2013/14 season, *Celebrity Solstice* will be joined from next year by the *Celebrity Century*, while *Celebrity Millennium* will also visit locally.

Taking effect from sailings beginning this week, the tiers of Elite Plus and Zenith supplement the current Preview, Classic, Select & Elite levels, all of which will remain in place.

Perks of the Elite Plus level include higher onboard discounts for drinks and speciality dining, 200-minute internet package and more.

Members attaining Zenith status will receive a free premium onboard drinks package, free laundry service, 1600-minutes internet access and a range of additional benefits.

Currently, the Captain's Club program contains more than 7,000 members across Australia and New Zealand alone, with figures expected to double by the end of the current season.

"At a time when many loyalty programs are cutting back on benefits or making it more difficult to redeem rewards, we're thrilled to do just the opposite," Celebrity Cruises director of loyalty Lee Moreau said.

A new system for accruing points has also been introduced, with all current benefit levels remaining and in some cases, automatically qualifying for the Elite Plus and Zenith tiers, with no expiration on current statuses earned.

The Club Points system acknowledges the stateroom categories booked and the number of cruising days booked, aimed to reward guests in higher categories on longer voyages.

"We hope this reinvigorated program will even more vividly show our guests how much we appreciate their loyalty, and allow us to welcome them back even more frequently," Moreau added.

For more details on the new program and benefits, visit www.bit.ly/cczenith.

Le Boat launches into Poland

SELF-DRIVE charter yacht operator Le Boat will expand its operations in 2014, opening a new base in The Masurian region in Poland, known as the "land of a thousand lakes".

The new fleet will come about following a partnership with Sun Yacht Charter, with the company's first Polish base to be in Giżycko.

Two and three-cabin vessels will be available, all with inside steering, onboard entertainment, kitchen and shore power.

For more details, see www.leboat.com.au.

CW packed with the latest

Today's trade issue of **CW** features five pages of all the latest cruise information.

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Express Cruises performs strongly

Cruise Marketing Group's fast-growing relationship with the Independent Travel Group is producing strong sales.

CRUISE Marketing Group (CMG) ceo Fred Sparksman was one of the presenters at last weekend's Hong Kong ITG conference, and told delegates that "we are delighted with the business that is coming from your group".

The relationship has been in place since July last year, with Cruise Marketing Group providing the product and fulfilment behind the Express Cruises platform.

Express Cruises is an extensive web-based resource which is available to ITG members, with extensive standardised information on cruise lines, ships, destinations and more.

"The Express Cruises website is your greatest sales tool - it makes you a cruise professional with 1500 products at your fingertips," said Sparksman, who is pictured above right with ITG ceo Tom Manwaring.

He told **CW** that sales through the group have "grown beyond our expectation.

"With the Express Cruises brand the products we've been able to deliver have certainly received approval out in the marketplace."

The range on offer includes fully packaged holidays, featuring multiple cruise lines, hotels,



transfers all in a single easy-to-sell (and hard to deconstruct) package.

"The product team at CMG is the best in the business - that's why our competitors copy our products," Sparksman said.

ITG members who want to 'take the next step' can join Worldwide Cruise Centres which is now approaching 100 members.

WWCC members get an exclusive territory, a website, exclusive products, subsidised advertising and incentive commissions.

Cruise Marketing Group has also recently soft launched a new Small Ship Cruises brand, which he said "fills a gap in the market to sell big ticket items."

He also flagged the future expansion of CMG products to include special interest cruises.

Touchdowns on Princess ships

PRINCESS Cruises has started screening live broadcasts of ESPN Monday Night Football NFL games on vessels on the pool deck of 11 ships departing from US ports.

Special tailgate parties featuring food, drink and an onboard halftime show accompany the screenings, along with stat updates & contests.

HAL's good times keep rolling

HOLLAND America Line will expand its B.B. King Blues Club evening entertainment concept to five more ships in its fleet in 2014 due to overwhelming popularity of the club.

The concept debuted on *MS Eurodam* in March this year, featuring the BB King Blues Club Band playing to packed crowds nightly.

Similar eight-piece bands will now be added to the line's *Westerdam*, *Zuiderdam*, *Noordam* and *Nieuw Amsterdam* vessels, along with a new open-ended run on the *Eurodam*.

Special stages will be installed on each ship resembling a Memphis nightclub complete with hanging guitars, speciality cocktails and portraits of the iconic Blues performer himself.

MEANWHILE, the line's popular Dancing with the Stars onboard program will also return on Holland America Line ships in 2014 due to popular reception of the concept this year.

All fifteen vessels in the fleet will roll out the dancing program, with a selection of voyages to also offer dancing demonstrations over the course of the year.

Second Oceania world cruise

STRONG sales of the company's first round-the-world voyage have seen Oceania Cruises launch a second global circumnavigation.

With the first 180-day voyage on 10 Jan 2015 selling out in only eight hours, a second cruise leaving from Miami on 08 Jul 2015 will visit a number of ports too cold to visit during the northern winter, such as Iceland & Greenland.

Both voyages will be operated by the 684-pax *Insignia*, going on sale on 04 Dec at 8:30am US Eastern time, priced from US\$44,999ppts.



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New CLIA Masters get accredited at sea

CARNIVAL Spirit was the setting for the 15th annual Cruise Lines International Association Australasia Masters Conference, where the latest crop of cruising experts concluded their training and enjoyed the South Pacific scenery.

This year's crop of Masters numbered more than 60 from all corners of Australia and New Zealand.

Sales motivator Scott Koepf joined the group once again - he hasn't missed a single local Masters conference and was on hand to provide his unique techniques.

Amid a number of training sessions to fine tune the new Masters' skills, *Spirit's* amazing array of fun onboard activities were enjoyed to mix business with leisure.

Agents attending the conference will join the ranks of Cruise Masters upon successful completion of a post conference assignment.

"This year's Masters Conference was a huge success with agents gaining invaluable knowledge and tools to remain at the top of their game, while also experiencing all the



fun onboard *Carnival Spirit*," CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said.

The group of attending agents are pictured above aboard *Carnival Spirit*.

New Princess design changes

CHANGES are being made to the design of Princess Cruises' new ship *Regal Princess* will be made, which will see a new promenade deck and pool at the rear of the ship added.

According to *Cruise Critic*, the changes in design are being carried out in response to feedback from passengers who have travelled on twin sister-ship *Royal Princess*.

The aft pool will be added to *Regal*, which is set to launch mid next year, and then added to *Royal Princess* in its first scheduled drydock.

Extreme activities on Crystal

ACTIVITIES including crocodile hunting and Great White Shark encounters will be among the thrill-seeking adventures available on the 10 Mar *Crystal Serenity* sailing from Singapore to Cape Town, the line has announced.

Cruising with mobility issues

FOR a client with mobility issues, it may seem like holiday options are limited, but a cruise is an ideal way to explore the world; and all it requires is a little extra effort in the planning stages by the agent.

A greater focus should be on qualifying your client on their past experiences and challenges. Once their needs are established you can be comforted to know modern cruise lines have alleviated these potential barriers by their access friendly designs, as well as easy-to-use assistive walking and transport devices.

Know how many accessible staterooms are available, whether there is manageable gaming and showroom seating and if the cruise line offers early boarding and departure assistance.

Choosing an itinerary is critical, try to minimize tender ports as much as possible.

Despite cruise lines such as Holland America that have wheelchair-accessible tender systems, sea conditions will be the ultimate decider. Of course a product like a river cruise is perfect in this particular scenario. It is also extremely important that you record the specification of any equipment that they will have.

This allows the cruise line, ground handlers and tour operators to be prepared – not all scooter configurations are the same and they may need ramp adjustments.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that Baby Boomers are twice as likely to have mobility issues than generations in the past, and since they will become the majority of traveller in the next decade, creating a list of what ships have in such scenarios today will allow you to give tremendous advice to new clients that approach you in the future.



Peter Kollar - Training & Development Manager



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Silver Wind refurb complete

A TOTAL makeover to the Le Champagne restaurant which included a redesigned entrance, new wine display, new wood floors and fabrics and a modified seating layout are among the changes made to Silversea Cruises' *Silver Wind* after its emergence from drydock.

The two week refurbishment took place in Palermo, Italy, which also saw the propulsion and onboard mechanical systems examined and maintained.

In addition to the restaurant amendment, new carpets and upholstery was installed in all suites, with new bar furniture, new tiling laid and new pool deck seating added.

Cruising to Bali's north shore

PASSENGER ships could soon be making stops in Celukan Bawang on the far north shore of Bali, with local authorities understood to be assessing the port for suitability to ships.

Action is being taken on developing the port for potential visits after interest in the region was expressed by cruise line executives.

According to local publication *Bisnis Bali*, favourable sea conditions, pier location and access to new & developing areas are proving to be of interest among cruise ship operators.

Marina to return to Australia

BRISBANE, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart will serve as ports of call for Oceania Cruises' *Marina* during its latest Australian visit, due to take place in Feb next year.

The stop in the Queensland capital will be the first time the 1250-passenger *Marina* has berthed there.

Staterooms on *Marina* for a 16-day journey from Sydney to Auckland are severely limited but still available, with the sailing priced from \$6,020ppts for an Inside Stateroom.

One of the ship's features is the Bon Appétit Culinary Centre, where culinary classes designed by chef Kathryn Kelly will be available over the course of 2014.

Flight bargain on Seabourn

GUESTS booking on *Seabourn Sojourn's* 34-day sailing from Sydney to Hong Kong can take advantage of a special \$499 one-way airfare back to Australia, the luxury line has detailed.

The Cathay Pacific fare is available for *Sojourn's* 08 Feb 2014 departure, staterooms for which are priced from \$13,999ppts.

Ports visited on the sailing include Kangaroo Island and Exmouth, Ambon in Indonesia and Sandakan in Malaysia - phone 132 402 for info.

New Victoria river cruise boat

THE Victorian town of Nagambie - located approx 90 minutes north of Melbourne - has launched a new river cruise venture aimed at boosting local visitor numbers.

State Governor Alex Chernov launched the new craft, officially naming the 50-seat vessel the *Goulburn Explorer*.

The vessel will operate day excursions on the Goulburn River on weekends from Nov to Apr and during school holidays, visiting local towns and offering passengers the opportunity to explore local wineries and regional townships.

Hapag-Lloyd to trawl Siberia

CRUISES in south-east Siberia are on the map for Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' *MS Hanseatic* vessel in 2014, the line has announced.

The voyage, known as Expedition Siberia, will visit the Primorye region, cruising to Ternei Bay and Vladivostok with zodiac tours along the Samarga River available to passengers.

A 17-day voyage will depart on 10 May 2014 from Seoul and travel to Otaru, Japan, also visiting Petrov Island and Udobnaya Bay, with cabins priced from €7,800ppts, while another East-Russia sailing will also visit Wrangel Island. Details at Landmark Travel on (02) 9977 7100.



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Hello Tomorrow 

CRUISE

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Thursday 28 November 2013



Loyal Posers wander on the Pacific Jewel



MEMBERS of online cruise portal ecruising.travel's Posh loyalty club were recently treated to a look at P&O Cruises' *Pacific Jewel* to check out the ship's new refurbishment.

The chance to explore the ship served as a welcome introduction to frequent passengers of other brands as well as those who were regulars of P&O voyages and wanted to check out the ship's new features & enhancements.

Following a significant renovation to interior and deck areas, *Jewel* boasts a number of new features including interconnecting cabins to cater to families or larger groups.

New public features include The Orient Bar and The Chocolate Ship - likely to be popular - as well as a new Dome nightclub and dual-deck child-free Oasis retreat for adults to relax.

The group of ecruising.travel's Posh loyalty

club members are **pictured** above with Bertha Harvey, Liz Moir and Jamie Thompson, all representing ecruising.travel.

Authentic Lofoten experience

HURTIGRUTEN has released a new 12-day itinerary incorporating a three-day stay in the Lofoten Islands, rich in fishing villages and picturesque mountain ranges, and including a visit to the world's strongest tidal current.

Cabins for the sailing are priced from £1,295pp twin share - phone 1800 623 267.

Cunard turns on the melodies

LEGENDARY crooner James Taylor will perform two concerts aboard Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* next year in celebration of the vessel's 10th anniversary of operation.

Both concerts will take place on a single eight-night transatlantic voyage, which departs on 27 Aug from New York, travelling via Halifax, Nova Scotia and on to Southampton.

Taylor and his band will perform in the Royal Court Theatre during the sailing.



FINANCE journalist Michael Pascoe was one of the keynote speakers at last week's Independent Travel Group conference in Hong Kong, and had a not-so-popular suggestion for some new cruise ship technology.

Royal Caribbean's Peter McCormack had done a presentation about the stunning new features of the upcoming *Quantum of the Seas* as well as the revamped *Voyager of the Seas*, which will return to Australia after a major makeover in Nov next year.

As well as more restaurants, a Flowrider and other additions, *Voyager* will feature innovative new "virtual balcony cabins" which add a big screen to inside staterooms displaying a live feed of the view from outside the ship, making you feel like you're actually looking out the window.

Pascoe's intriguing but unpopular idea was to ask delegates when this same technology will be available in the home "so you don't have to get on the ship at all".

ALSO at the conference, Fred Sparksman from Cruise Marketing Group spoke about how his company creates packages available through ITG's Express Cruises platform.

He said there's constantly a lot of work going into product development, and only about 50% of packages end up being worthwhile sellers.

"But you never know which half are going to work so you have to develop them all," Sparksman said.

He did however reveal one of the secrets of a successful US cruise package program.

"Whenever do a package in North America, if we have Las Vegas as the last destination visited before passengers head back to Australia, it will sell," he said.

Huge Crystal Asia shore range

CRYSTAL Cruises has launched its range of one and two-night itinerary extensions available from Feb to Apr 2014, with the range featuring 16 different excursions in Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangkok and China.

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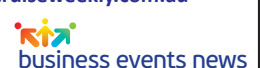
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