

# CRUISE



WEEKLY

Tuesday 1 October 2013

## Active river cruise option arrives

A-ROSA has started offering its European cruises to Australians looking for a wider range of activities and soft adventure.

**US-BASED** David Morris International (DMI) has partnered with A-ROSA Cruises to introduce its all-inclusive river cruises for the first time to the Australian market.

Overseeing the operation of three A-ROSA

vessels, DMI has tailored the onboard experience to suit a mix of Australian, American and Canadian passengers.

Among the points of difference to other river cruises, each ship has a swimming pool on the top deck and the shore excursions are "more active, attracting a slightly younger crowd", said a spokesperson.

Rather than the traditional walking tour in each port of call, A-ROSA also provides options for hiking, kayaking, cycling, museum visits, concerts, culinary events or market tours with the ship's chef.

Up to three complimentary excursions are offered in most ports, as well as optional activities such as horse-riding, hot-air ballooning and flights in a private aircraft.

Fares, which are generally lower than other all-inclusive operators, also include all gratuities, meals, transfers, wi-fi and an open bar all day (beer, wine, sparkling wine, cocktails, spirits, soft drinks, bottled water, tea and specialty coffees).

As a launch offer on select cruises, A-ROSA has waived the single supplement for cabin categories A and S and cut it to 20% for others.

Christmas cruises on the Rhine are still available this year, from US\$2,099 per person - a saving of \$1,000 per cabin.

To book, contact a travel agent or see [www.arosacruises.com](http://www.arosacruises.com) for more details.

## Carnival to build in Barcelona

AN agreement between Carnival Corp and the Port of Barcelona will see the construction of a super-size cruise terminal by 2016.

The 1,000 square metre terminal is designed to handle post-Panamax sized ships that carry 4,500 passengers.

Carnival's other terminal on the same wharf in Barcelona - the fourth-busiest cruise port in the world - will also be expanded.

## Australia nudges \$3 billion

THE local cruise industry continues its explosive growth, generating \$2.9 billion in "economic opportunity" in 2012-13.

The figures, according to a new Economic Impact Assessment of the Cruise Shipping Industry in Australia released last week by Cruise Down Under, show a healthy 18% year-on-year increase from the \$2.4 billion recorded in 2011-12.

Carnival Australia ceo Ann Sherry praised the milestone of "one decimal point from being a three billion dollar industry".

Sherry said numerous sectors benefited from cruising including agriculture, hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions tour operators, taxi and transport operators.

The latest evidence comes as the local industry prepares for this month's kick-off of another record cruise season with 34 vessels, most of them Carnival Australia ships.



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## APT celebrates 85th anniversary

APT owner Geoff McGeary hosted the company's 85th anniversary cruise on *Caledonia Sky*, which he says sets the tone for the next trend in cruising.

A **SMALL-SHIP** cruise from the Philippines to Papua New Guinea via Borneo and Indonesia was enough to confirm to Geoff McGeary that the "new concept" in cruises is not the ship or

the destination, but people's experiences.

"I think it will become the new 'in' thing - to have experiences, rather than just destination seeking," he told *Cruise Weekly* from aboard the 114-passenger *Caledonia Sky* that APT acquired last year.

"We've been welcomed everywhere we go, and in some places, we are the first ship that has ever visited them.

"It's these kinds of moments that will draw more people to small ships," McGeary said.

"We've seen orangutans in their natural habitat, and Komodo dragons on Komodo Island, we've taken zodiacs along the world's longest underground river, and we've been to an island where we learnt about their unusual burial rites," he recalled of the September cruise celebrating the company started by his father 85 years ago in Melbourne.

McGeary, who has run APT since 1956 when he was only 19 years old, has seen its direction steer from coaches to cruise ships.

"It feels a bit unbelievable that we now specialise in cruising," he said.

*Caledonia Sky* is dedicated to Asia-Pacific for 2014-15, while in Europe, bookings have opened for Gallipoli trips in 2015, which are combined with APT's most popular 15-day Magnificent Europe river cruise.

"We have two ships doing that itinerary and we're negotiating for a third," McGeary said.

### Mein Schiff 2 to be replaced

TUI Cruises' 1900-passenger *Mein Schiff 2*, which operates roundtrips from Malta for the German market, will be replaced with the newly built 2,500-passenger *Mein Schiff 3* from June next year.

The new ship will have 11 restaurants, 12 bars and a 25-metre outdoor pool.

Tourism Minister Karmenu Vella told a news conference that Tui Cruises flew 2,000 Germans each week to Valetta, which has served as the ship's homeport for four years.

In that time, only 7,000 Maltese passengers took cruises on the *Mein Schiff 2*.

### SeaDream's first Asian voyage

THE 112-passenger *SeaDream II* has space available on its seven-night sailing from Singapore through the Indonesian Islands to Bali, marking SeaDream Yacht Club's first-ever visit to Asia.

Prices start at US\$3,954 per person twin-share including all five-star dining, selected wines, spirits and beers, use of a 30-course golf simulator, power and sail water-sports equipment (where permitted,) and gratuities.

Ports of call include Semarang in Central Java, Lombok, Komodo Island, with two full days at sea - for bookings, contact a travel agent or see [www.seadream.com](http://www.seadream.com) for details.



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## WIN A DOUBLE PASS TO A LUNCH CRUISE



Today *Cruise Weekly* is giving three lucky readers the chance to win a double pass to a festival lunch cruise with **Sydney Harbour Tall Ships**, valued at \$498 each.

The Australian Fleet Review week, starting October 3rd, is going to be the biggest



event in Sydney Harbour history, celebrating the centenary of the first entry of the Royal Australian Navy Fleet into the Harbour in 1913.

The Sydney Tall Ship fleet will be joining the 58 warships and tall ships taking part in the week's events, which will prove to be a once in a lifetime opportunity for any involved.

To win, be one of the first three people to send in the correct answer to the below question to: [comp@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:comp@cruiseweekly.com.au)

What's the name of the first ship purchased by Sydney Harbour Tall Ships?

Hint! Visit [www.sydneytallships.com.au](http://www.sydneytallships.com.au)

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Tuesday 1 October 2013

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## Black Sea to Venice special

**SAVINGS** of up to \$10,000 per person are on offer for a 30-night cruise/fly/land package from eCruising, which includes an Eastern Europe voyage aboard the *Azamara Quest*.

The cruise departs on 20 June 2014, sailing from Istanbul to Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey, Croatia and the Greek islands of Mykonos, Rhodes, Santorini and Korcula.

But before you board, the package also includes two nights pre-cruise at the stunning Ritz Carlton hotel in Istanbul, and afterwards there are also two nights in Venice.

The itinerary is now priced from \$11,849 (was \$21,919) per person and includes return flights from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide or Perth, the accommodation in Istanbul and Venice, the 23-night cruise (including alcohol and three evening excursions), and a three-night stopover at Raffles Hotel in Dubai.

Valid for bookings before 15 November - call 1300 369 848 or see [www.ecruising.travel](http://www.ecruising.travel).

## Earlybird special from MSC

**MSC Cruises** is offering earlybird savings of up to \$100 per person off its 2014 prices, for cruisers who book their voyages for next year by 30 November.

There are 7, 8, 9 and 11 night Mediterranean voyages calling at Izmir, Istanbul, Yalta, Odessa, Costanta and the Greek Islands, while the 14 night Grand Mediterranean cruises depart from either Venice or Genoa.

MSC will also cruise in the Baltics next year as well as the Arabian Peninsula, South America and the Caribbean - early bookings start at just \$609 per person for a 7 night voyage - see your travel agent or call 1800 028 502.

**MEANWHILE** the cruise line is offering avid US cruisers the opportunity to stroll the red carpet at the launch of its new *MSC Divina*.

A new competition dubbed "Living the Diva Life" has launched today, with a grand prize of a place on the three night debut sailing from Miami on 20 November.

Participants can enter the competition by creating a short video (90 seconds or less) on how they enjoy living the diva life, and link the uploaded video on Instagram or Twitter using the hashtag #MSCDivalife.

Once submitted, entrants are encouraged to get their family and friends to vote to help them win - see [facebook.com/MSC.Cruises.USA](http://facebook.com/MSC.Cruises.USA).

The new ship will see the introduction of new dining venues including the Ristorante Italia and Eataly Steakhouse, and will also be the "first ship to offer Aqua Cycling at sea".

## Ponant waives supplements

**TRAVEL** the World is offering a range of bonus inclusions for solo cruisers who book Compagnie du Ponant Asia sailings by the end of this month.

The cruise operator has waived the single supplement on several 2013 and 2014 voyages aboard the line's luxury expedition vessels, including some Asia voyages on the brand new *Le Soleal*.

Superior staterooms start at \$3841 per person for an eight night Singapore roundtrip departing 02 December, and the deal also includes an open bar, €150 onboard credit, all port charges and fuel supplements and any onboard gratuities.

There's also no single supplement on a European voyage between Nice and Naples aboard *Le Ponant* which departs 28 April 2014.

This trip is priced from \$3822 for a cabin on the Marie-Galante Deck - for details see your travel agent or contact Travel the World on 1800 857 437 or [www.traveltheworld.com.au](http://www.traveltheworld.com.au).

## Cruise Calendar

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

### SYDNEY

*Rhapsody of the Seas* (OPT) Sat 05 Oct  
*Carnival Spirit* (OPT) Mon 07 Oct  
*Sea Princess* (WBCT) Mon 07 Oct

### BRISBANE

*Pacific Dawn* Sat 05 Oct

### DARWIN

*Dawn Princess* Sat 05 Oct



**HOW** will this innovation go down on your next family holiday?

Celebrity Cruises, in partnership with Cantor Gaming, has come up with a way to allow passengers to gamble outside of its ships' casinos - perhaps by the pool, in an onboard bar or even in the buffet line!

By downloading an app on their Android or Apple smartphones or tablets, guests can play slots, video poker and table games using the wi-fi network anywhere onboard when sailing in international waters.

Before they start their mobile gambling passengers are invited to create a "virtual wallet" at the ship's casino desk to activate and fund their account.

Greg Purdy, the line's senior vice president of operations, said people can play the casino's games "whether relaxing by the pool, or waiting for their partner to get ready for their night of dining and drinks."

"Cantor Gaming's modern approach to mobile gaming will ensure that our guests have an unmatched experience," he said.

The app will be available on four of Celebrity's "Solsticized" Millennium class ships as well as its five Solstice class vessels - including the locally-based *Celebrity Solstice*.



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Tuesday 1 October 2013

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### Star Clippers revamps site

**LUXURY** sailing ship cruise operator Star Clippers has launched a new website which aims to make it easier for prospective cruisers to dream about their trips.

There's a simplified Voyage Planner tool which allows travellers to select the sailing date, destination, ship and time frame of their holiday, while there's also a series of videos about the Star Clippers experience.

Virtual ship tours are on offer and all itineraries for 2014 and early 2015 are also already detailed on the website.

A Travel Agent Locator tool also helps users find a local travel professional who knows the Star Clippers product.

The new website is now accessible online at [www.starclippers.com](http://www.starclippers.com).

### Not quite cruising, but...

**THE** billionaire owners of Hamilton Island have issued a formal challenge for the 35th America's Cup, laying down the gauntlet shortly after Team USA's recent thrilling win in San Francisco against Emirates Team NZ.

Bob Oatley, whose succession of *Wild Oats* yachts have dominated Australian ocean racing for many years, will lead the team alongside his son Sandy on behalf of the Hamilton Island Yacht Club.

### Costa refugee rescue

**COSTA** Cruises' *Costa Pacifica* has come to the aid of a boat filled with Syrian refugees, which issued a distress call off the coast of Italy last Friday.

The cruise ship responded to the message, changing course to help with the retrieval of about 120 people on the boat which was about 100km off the Calabrian coast.

37 of the Syrians were taken on board the *Pacific* which was joined at the rescue site by an Italian Coast Guard patrol vessel.

Costa said "the whole operation was carried out in complete safety, in accordance with Coast Guard instructions".

*Costa Pacifica* was en route from Piraeus in Greece to Civitavecchia, where it arrived on schedule at 9am the next morning.



### Port Review: Sitka, Alaska

By Roger Condon

Every year, I like to include an Alaskan port of call in my port reviews, and I freely admit that I do this because it is one of my all-time favourite destinations. Almost all cruises to Alaska include Juneau, Ketchikan, Skagway and an obligatory day amongst the ice and glaciers. Many cruises are just seven days, however, I'd suggest looking for a voyage of 10 days or more, allowing you to visit places like Haines and of course, Sitka, once the capital of Russian America, before it was sold to the US in 1867 for just two cents per acre.

Sitka is one of those ports where your ship will need to anchor off-shore and tender all passengers into town. Once ashore, you're just a short walk into downtown and you're also on an island (Baranof Island). Great shore excursions are available in this port and they all depart directly from the dock, so it's easy.

There's loads of history within walking distance and you'll soon discover that Sitka has an incredible flavour unlike any of the other Alaskan ports, where the culture of the local Tlingit people who settled here over 10,000 years ago, the Russian influence, and of course the good ole' USA have melded together. In town there's shopping galore, of which you'll find artistic museum quality Tlingit treasures, a delightful Russian cathedral (St. Michael's) and a total of 24 attractions listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Wildlife abounds here including the mighty bald eagle, cuddly looking sea otters, Sitka black tailed deer, sea lions, tufted puffins, and Sitka Sound is known as a humpback whale playground.

There's so much to do here during your day. Visit the Sitka National Historic Park and Cultural Centre where you'll view beautiful, hand-carved totems, and then head up to the Alaska Raptor Centre, where you can see the impressive bald eagle up close and personal. One of the most popular activities is ocean fishing for salmon and halibut and in summer you're sure to catch lunch. The Sea Otter and Wildlife Quest is a wonderful ship's tour, along with ATV, kayak, cycling and hiking tours for more thrills. There's even a Russian dance troupe. This is just a sampling!

### Roger's Quick Tips

**Best Months:** May - Sep

**Don't Miss:** Raptor display & talk at Raptor Centre

**Tour or Not:** Half day tour then half day on your own

**Sightseeing:** Alaska Raptor Centre, ocean fishing

**Food:** Salmon and halibut

**Language:** English

**Shopping:** Tlingit art, Russian lacquer ware

**Cash or Card:** Credit Card and USD



Sitka

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



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## Touchdown Antarctica

by: Roderick Eime

*The panorama was magnificent – the jagged mountains of black and green rock and glittering snow slopes of Trinity (peninsula) towering besides, above us the clear sky, below us blue-black water and icebergs – everything frozen and still, black and blue-black and black-green and glittering white –* Captain Sir George Hubert Wilkins MC & bar.

These words could have been uttered by any modern airborne explorer of the Antarctic, flying low over the frozen wilderness of the great southern land.

For decades now, explorers and scientists have been flying to Antarctica on resupply missions, remote field studies and even aerial mapping.

Any reader could be forgiven for thinking these observations came from one of these recent flights aboard a turboprop C-130 Hercules or Orion, but no - in 1928, an almost forgotten Adelaide-born explorer and aviator, Sir Hubert Wilkins, made these remarks as he and pilot Ben Eielson created history as the first to successfully deploy an aircraft.

Today, visitors to Deception Island off the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula can visit the site of Wilkins' runway where these history making flights took place.

And sure, modern travellers can now get aboard a chartered 747 and gaze longingly down on these same icy wastes laid out before them. But what would it be like to actually land and explore?

In 2003, the specialised air-cruise company, ANTARCTICA XXI, conducted the first commercial combined passenger flight and cruise expedition. Flying from Punta Arenas in Chilean Patagonia across the Drake Passage to their base at Antarctic Station President Eduardo Frei Montalva, guests were able to experience the rare thrill of flying to and landing in Antarctic as well as the popular cruise among the spectacular

vistas and icebergs described by Wilkins 85 years ago from his tiny plane.

Travellers arriving at Antarctica Station Frei will transfer from the perfectly suited BAE-146 70-seat, quad-jet aircraft to the *MV Ocean Nova*, a Danish-built vessel expressly constructed for sailing in ice-choked polar seas.

The cruise program is typically 4-6 nights, with a special 'Polar Circle', 8-night departure on New Years Day. These itineraries are several days shorter than comparable cruises offered by the major operators, only because they eliminate either or both crossings of the notorious Drake Passage and devote valuable time to sight-seeing among the placid waters of the Antarctic Peninsula.

The week-long "Classic Antarctica Air Cruise" avoids both ocean crossings and spends time sailing from the South Shetland Islands to the western coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, taking in all the splendour and glory of such locations as Paulet Island, Hope Bay, Port Lockroy, Petermann Island, Paradise Bay, Deception Island, and the famous Lemaire Channel.

Each day passengers go ashore to explore the alien terrain and visit penguin, seal and bird colonies in the company of experienced and knowledgeable guides.

One of the deterrents to Antarctic cruising is the time required to devote to the exercise, not to mention the potential discomfort to delicate tummies when traversing 'the passage'. Now with the time-saving comfort of an exciting jet aircraft transfer, travellers can enjoy the Antarctic experience within normal holiday time periods – and not wait until retirement!

For details and bookings on ANTARCTICA XXI flights, find your local Cruiseco agent at [www.cruising.com.au](http://www.cruising.com.au).



Sir George Hubert Wilkins sets out in 1928.



Ocean Nova in Antarctica.



Arriving by modern jet in Antarctica.

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Part of the Travel Daily group of publications.

Travel Daily CRUISE WEEKLY Pharmacy DAILY

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