

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 15 October 2013

## Carnival chief sets course for future

Matching passengers to the right cruise remains one of the most important keys for the further growth of cruising.

**CARNIVAL** Australia CEO Ann Sherry addressed the Cruise Shipping Asia Pacific conference in Singapore last week, emphasising the main ways for the industry to stay strong.

Keeping in mind her ambitious goal of one million Australian passengers annually, Sherry said it was vital to understand the different needs of different types of passengers to ensure they sailed on the most appropriate ship and itinerary.

"Five years ago when we set a target of a million passengers a year by 2020, very few believed it was possible, but here we are in

2013 and on course to achieve the target four years earlier than expected," she said after her speech.

"Understanding market segmentation and being clear about which segments we are pursuing has also been an important element of Carnival Australia's success, along with making local and international cruising key components our growth story."

Sherry stressed the importance of aiming high, saying, "Our experience confirms that setting a bold target and then energising our people and resources to achieving it was vital to growing the cruise category."

The conference was also an opportunity to discuss the critical issue of port infrastructure, with Sherry adding that it was crucial to not go overboard.

"The need for appropriate investment in port facilities remains a high priority issue for the Australian cruise industry, however, recent experience in Asia shows that over-investment in infrastructure in concentrated areas can present its own problems.

"It is essential to get the infrastructure balance right - it has to be functional and capable of supporting growth but it also has to be commercially viable both for the operators and the cruise shipping companies using it."

### AIDA names new flagship

**GERMAN** cruise line AIDA Cruises has announced that the first of its newbuild vessels (**CW** 09 Jul) will be named *AIDAprima*.

The vessel is currently under construction in Japan and will have capacity for about 3,300 passengers and "usher in a new age of cruising" with a beach club, 13 restaurants and a 45m high glass "skywalk" at the ship's stern.

### RCI's free flights to Sydney

**CRUISERS** who complain that all the best cruises depart from Sydney can now take delight in an offer of free flights to join a *Rhapsody of the Seas* South Pacific cruise.

Guests living in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and the Gold Coast can take advantage of the free flights to Sydney on 18 December for the nine-night cruise to New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands.

The cruise is priced from \$1,579 per person twin share in an interior cabin.

For info, see [www.royalcaribbean.com.au](http://www.royalcaribbean.com.au), call 1800 754 500 or contact a travel agent.

## Cruise Calendar

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

### SYDNEY

<i>Sun Princess</i>	Wed 16 Oct
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	Thu 17 Oct
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Sat 19 Oct
<i>Volendam</i>	Sun 20 Oct
<i>Sea Princess</i>	Sun 20 Oct

### BRISBANE

<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Sat 19 Oct
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### DARWIN

<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Sat 19 Oct
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### AUCKLAND

<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	Sat 19 Oct
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Sun 20 Oct

### WELLINGTON

<i>Sea Princess</i>	Tue 15 Oct
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### TAURANGA

<i>Sun Princess</i>	Mon 21 Oct
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## Free wi-fi on Regent ships

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises is offering up to 500 minutes of free wi-fi to guests in Concierge Level suites and higher from late next year.

The deal begins with the following cruises: *Seven Seas Voyager's* 31 Oct 'Legendary Sands' from Istanbul to Dubai; *Seven Seas Mariner's* 03 Nov 'Coast to Coast' from Miami to Los Angeles; and *Seven Seas Navigator's* 06 Nov 2014 'Exotic Explorations' from Miami.

The number of free minutes will be based on voyage length ranging from 200 minutes on a seven night sailing through to 500 minutes on sailings longer than 16 nights.

The line will also undertake a major upgrade of the fleet's onboard internet system, which will see the satellite bandwidth doubled in order to improve both the quality and speed.

To be completed by the end of this year, the overhaul will expand wi-fi coverage throughout the whole ship including all suites, public rooms and outdoor decks.

"This enhancement to our product offering is a natural evolution for our all-inclusive brand which already includes... unlimited shore excursions, premium spirits and fine wines, and gratuities," said Randall Soy, RSSC's executive vice president of sales and marketing, in his blog.



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## Did You Know?

### Windstar Cruises

- ◆ The Windstar ships are referred to as motor-sailed-yachts (msy), because of their unique rigging. The eye-catching white sails of the Windstar ships unfurl in only two minutes, with the simple touch of a button.
- ◆ The Windstar Cruises slogan is "180 Degrees from Ordinary." This is based on their goal of creating a holiday experience unlike any other. Their yacht-like ships are geared towards active adults, seeking five-star dining, top quality service, and interesting itineraries.
- ◆ The line was established as Windstar Sail Cruises in 1984, and its first ship, the *Wind Star*, launched in 1986, followed by the *Wind Song* and *Wind Spirit*.
- ◆ Windstar attracts many honeymooners, couples celebrating anniversaries and family reunions. Windstar averages ten honeymoon and anniversary couples a week on their ships.
- ◆ Holland America Line purchased 50% of Windstar Sail Cruises in 1987 and bought the balance of the company in 1988, selling it to Ambassadors International in 2007. The company is now owned by Xanterra Parks and Resorts which bought it after Ambassadors went into bankruptcy protection in 2011.
- ◆ The ships are registered in the Bahamas. Under this flag they are some of the few cruise ships in the world where passengers are still allowed on the bridge (though not when entering or leaving port).
- ◆ Complimentary water sports are available (including water-skiing, windsurfing, snorkelling, sailing, ski-tubing, and kayaking), via the water sports platform located in the rear (aft) of the Windstar ships.
- ◆ With a shallow draft of only 14 feet (4.3 metres) the ships can enter ports that are inaccessible to larger cruise liners.
- ◆ In 2013 Windstar announced the purchase of Seabourn Cruise Line's *Seabourn Pride*, *Seabourn Legend*, *Seabourn Spirit*. The *Seabourn Pride* will enter service in May 2014, sisters *Seabourn Legend* & *Seabourn Spirit* will enter service in May 2015.
- ◆ The latest innovation from Windstar is 'Signature Sailings' which is a unique collection of themed voyages.

## Zoo seals deal with Antarctic operator

One Ocean Expeditions (OOE) has partnered with Sydney's Taronga Zoo to offer a unique voyage to Antarctica next year.

**RYAN Tate (pictured)**, a leading authority on the seal species of Antarctica and the co-ordinator of the Great Southern Ocean Unit at Taronga, will join the 16 March 2014 departure to present several talks about the groundbreaking work being undertaken in Antarctica.

Taronga Zoo is a founding partner of the Australian Marine Mammal Research Centre (AMMRC), which has been conducting scientific research in Antarctica for the past 15 years, studying the effects of climate change on the wildlife population.

One Ocean CEO Andrew Prossin said, "We are privileged to have someone of Ryan's immense experience join us this season. His knowledge of seal behaviour is unrivalled".



Dr Ari Friedlaender, research scientist at Duke University (USA) will also accompany the cruise.

His research focuses on the feeding behaviour and movement patterns of marine mammals around the world and has been the focus of numerous wildlife documentaries by the BBC and National Geographic.

For further information call 0410 417 006 or visit [www.oneoceanexpeditions.com](http://www.oneoceanexpeditions.com).

## 'Cheep' deal to Canary Islands

**MSC Cruises** has a seven-night cruise, priced from \$529 per person twin-share, exploring Morocco and the Canary Islands next year.

Aboard the *MSC Armonia*, the trip takes in attractions such as Casa de Colon and Santa Cruz and the Madeira wine region, with the choice of two departures from Las Palmas on 15 or 22 Feb 2014.

For bookings, call 1300 028 502.

## Option to remove *Concordia*

**THE** upright *Costa Concordia* may be lifted from the water by the world's largest semi-submersible salvage vessel, the 275m-long *Dockwise Vanguard*.

A \$30 million deal has reportedly been made with a Dutch company to use the vessel as a possible option to move the shipwreck from off the coast of Italy's Giglio island.

The *Vanguard* would sink underneath the *Concordia* and then rise up to elevate it clear of the water before sailing it away to be scrapped.

The operation would be the biggest salvage ever attempted on a ship of its size.

Meanwhile, since moving the *Concordia* into an upright position last month, divers have found the remains of one of two people who were still unaccounted for, BBC reports.



**CARNIVAL** Cruise Lines is getting very social, with passengers on board a nine-day Mediterranean cruise this week being engaged to showcase *Carnival Sunshine* on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The "social media takeover" includes daily posts on Instagram where fans of the ship can participate in live interactive 'meet the crew' chats asking questions of crew members with on-the-spot responses.

Whoever is looking after the promotion on board looks like they're having a good time, with one of the images posted this morning (right) showing a refreshing pint of ThirstyFrog Red at the onboard RedFrog Pub.



Passengers on the cruise can also send Instagram video "shout outs" to their family and friends at home.

Next month *Carnival Sunshine*, which was transformed earlier this year in a US\$155 million makeover, relocates to New Orleans.

See [instagram.com/carnival](http://instagram.com/carnival).



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## Recipe of the Month

### Seared Cajun Tuna Steak with Tomato Confit, Horse-Radish Roesti & Basil Oil

This month's recipe comes from Holland America Line

#### Preparation

**Tomatoes:** Preheat oven to 150°C. Arrange tomatoes on roasting tray. Scatter thyme sprigs & garlic cloves on top. Sprinkle olive oil & sea salt. Bake for 45 mins, then turn: bake until tomatoes shrink slightly but are still plump & moist, about 1 hour. Cool. Peel off skins. Cover & refrigerate. Bring to room temp before using.

**Horseradish roesti:** Squeeze out liquid out of potatoes with tea towel. In large mixing bowl, combine potatoes with horseradish & oil; season with salt & pepper. Preheat oven to 100°C. Put baking sheet in oven & place a rack on it. In frypan, heat 2 tbs butter. Spread potato mixture in the pan. Brown until golden & crusty on the bottom, approx 5-7 mins. Invert roesti onto pan lid & remove from heat. Add remaining 2 tbs butter to preheated pan. Slide roesti into pan raw side down & brown for 5-7 min. With 7cm round cutter, cut out 4 rounds from the roesti on cutting board and keep warm on rack in oven.

**Cajun tuna:** Rub tuna steak with 1 ½ tsp oil & Cajun. In a cast-iron skillet, heat remaining 2tbs oil until it begins to smoke. Sear tuna on each side for only 1 min; the tuna is served rare. Cut each steak into 2 triangles. Stand triangles on each plate with a roesti & spoonful of tomato confit. Decorate plate with basil oil & crème fraîche.

**Basil oil:** Bring salted water to a boil. Prepare bowl of ice water. Drop basil leaves into boiling water; cook just until tender but still green, 2 to 3 mins. Drain; move leaves to ice water. When cool, squeeze out water from basil & place in food processor with a bit of the oil. With machine running, add remaining oil slowly. Transfer to a container, cover, and chill.



#### Ingredients

**Tomato confit:** 1kg tomatoes, quartered  
4 large fresh thyme sprigs  
3 cloves garlic, unpeeled  
¼ cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon coarse sea salt

**Horseradish roesti:** 500g potatoes, grated  
¼ cup coarsely grated fresh horseradish  
4 teaspoons vegetable oil  
Salt and pepper to taste  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter

**Cajun tuna:** 4 tuna steaks, about 1 inch thick  
¼ cup oil  
2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning  
Basil oil, for garnish (recipe below)  
Crème fraîche, for garnish

**Basil oil:** ½ cup densely packed basil leaves  
1 cup neutral oil, such as grape seed or canola

## Canal cruising takes off

**FRANCE** specialist travel operator French Travel Connection has more than doubled the river and canal cruise offering in its 2014 brochure which was released yesterday.

The program now includes more than 50 pages of options on the waterways of France including self drive canal boats, crewed canal barges, crewed yacht charters and river cruises.

Managing director Brad McDonnell told **CW** the expansion is in response to a huge surge in popularity, with many repeat visitors to France looking for new and interesting experiences.

He highlighted "hotel barges" as a great way to travel, offering fully inclusive luxury travel with private touring, cycling and fabulous cuisine at very reasonable prices.

There's also an all-inclusive luxury yacht cruise on the French Riviera, where travellers cruise in comfort with a professional skipper and personal chef.

For a copy of the brochure see your travel agent or [www.frenchtravel.com.au](http://www.frenchtravel.com.au).

  
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## River Cloud II cruise tours

**ECRUISE.TRAVEL** has designed a selection of exclusive new travel packages using the *River Cloud II* European river ship.

Savings of between \$3800 and \$9400 per person twin share are available on three *River Cloud II* 2014 itineraries if booked by 15 Nov.

The 13-night "Holland's and Belgium's Cultural Capitals" tour which departs on 28 June 2014 is now priced from \$7549 and includes a seven night Amsterdam round-trip cruise, return economy airfares, five star pre and post accommodation and a three night luxury Dubai stopover - call 1300 369 848.

## P&O PNG sneak preview

**CHANNEL nine's Today Show** is this week giving Australians a taste of P&O Cruises' upcoming new Papua New Guinea cruises, with weather updates during the show coming from PNG's exotic remote islands.

Weather presenter Steve Jacobs is appearing in live crosses from Rabaul and the Trobriand Islands each morning from today until Friday.

Segments will highlight the Rabaul volcano, the region's rich World War II history and more, in the lead-up to the inaugural P&O *Pacific Dawn* Papua New Guinea voyage which departs from Brisbane on 31 Oct.

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## Burmese Days: Pandaw on the Irrawaddy

by: Roderick Eime

**FROM** on board the *RV Katha Pandaw*, Burma. Location: 24deg 10.23' North / 96deg 20.6' East.

The saga of Pandaw, Burma and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company is the stuff of legend and this modest dispatch does not permit telling of the entire story.

Suffice to say there is a great deal of nostalgia involved with any cruise aboard a Pandaw vessel and the region of the Irrawaddy around Mandalay and Katha in middle Burma is the spiritual home of the once great fleet that numbered some 600 vessels.

Each and every one was scuttled as the Japanese advanced through Burma during WWII, forcing the company staff to flee via a hazardous overland trek to India.

Soon the renewed passenger fleet will number 13 vessels with the launch of the smaller, boutique-sized *RV Kalay Pandaw* in early 2014, but for now the dozen authentically styled, reproduction vessels run on scheduled departures of 7, 14 or 21 days on the Mekong and here, the fabled Irrawaddy as well as the Chindwin, in modern day Myanmar.

Relaxing on the breezy teak deck is a heady mix of romance and pomposity as G&Ts are served on demand by doting Burmese stewards and the only exertion required is to move to the dining table for superbly prepared local and regional dishes.

Half of the Pandaw fleet is less than two years old and gleam like new pins. Highly varnished teak is the hallmark of construction and the typical vessel has 30 self-contained cabins plus dining room, lecture space, bar, boutique and spa/massage facilities.

Smaller vessels like this one, the *RV Katha Pandaw* and her twin,

the *RV Angkor Pandaw*, have just 16 cabins and combined dining/bar and lounge areas under a single large canopy.

The attraction of Burma as a new travel destination has been steadily on the rise for several years, and now with the apparent relaxation of the tight military rule which had seen Myanmar as a pariah state, the demand has trended further upward. Pandaw, with its established record of operation (since 1995) is perfectly poised to capitalise on this spike in interest.

With roads in Burma laughingly referred to as being of one of two types, either potholed or bumpy, the smooth transit along the scenic rivers is the perfect means to explore this vast land bordered by China, Thailand, India, Laos and Bangladesh.

Shore excursions take the form of temple visits and strolls through the many bustling little markets in the riverside towns like Kyar Nyat or Nwe Nyeim. We investigate the local pottery industry, silk weaving and gourmet food stalls which feature such delicacies as dried fish, root crops and stir-fried grasshoppers.

The history of these quaint former British colonial ports is not lost either. Katha, in particular, is something of a mecca for literary buffs having been the setting for George Orwell's debut 1934 novel, *Burmese Days*, based on his firsthand experiences as a colonial policeman in the remote town during the mid-1920s.

One such admirer said "all the novel's key buildings remain much as Orwell described them, and walking through the streets of Katha feels like walking onto an abandoned stage-set."

For information on all Pandaw vessels, destinations and departures, contact Active Travel on 02 9264 1231 or [www.activetravel.com.au](http://www.activetravel.com.au).



*RV Katha Pandaw jostles for space*



*Colourful flower seller in riverside market*



*Buddhist temples dot the Burmese landscape*

**Cruise Weekly** is Australia's favourite online cruising publication. In production since 2007, **Cruise Weekly** is published each Tuesday, with a further travel industry update each Thursday.

**Cruise Weekly** is free and is sent to subscribers via email as an Adobe Acrobat PDF document.

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