

### New look *Fiji Princess*

**BOUTIQUE** Fijian cruise line Blue Lagoon Cruises will next month relaunch its flagship vessel *Fiji Princess* after carrying out a \$1.2 million luxury refurbishment.

The line's final voyage with its current look concludes tomorrow morning before being taken out of action from 05-27 Apr.

Once ready, *Fiji Princess* will boast entirely new interiors in a nautical theme, paying tribute to its Fijian maritime history.

New onboard colour schemes will reflect a dark charcoal feel, with black, navy and gold trims and stained timbers.

Artwork will be refreshed throughout the vessel, with new seating, feature lights and upholstery added to project a modern and luxurious feel while maintaining the heritage.

"*Fiji Princess* has a long history cruising Fiji's islands and it's high time she had a rest and a makeover," Blue Lagoon Cruises chief executive Peter Duncan said.

Following a soft relaunch late this month, the grand reveal for the new experience will take place at the Fiji Tourism Exchange (FTE) trade show early next month.

Last year, Blue Lagoon Cruises announced it was repositioning its brand as a more upmarket premium product and enticing new demographics by imposing a minimum passenger age of 14 (*TD* 17 May 2013).

### Celebrity unveils 2015/16

**CELEBRITY** Cruises has launched its 2015/16 season of Australasian itineraries, which include departures from Perth, Sydney and Auckland to destinations such as Hawaii, Asia, the South Pacific islands and New Zealand.

Among the line's new ports of call for the season are Mystery Island in Vanuatu, with new experiences available including cruising the Fiordland National Park on New Zealand sailings.

*Celebrity Solstice* will return for a fourth summer season with 16 local sailings between Sep 2015 and Apr 2016.

The ship's five South Pacific itineraries range from eight to 12 nights, while New Zealand cruises will run from 12 to 14 nights.

In Sep 2015, the ship will sail from Vancouver to Sydney on a 10-night Hawaii and 18-night Tahitian Treasures cruise, which guests can combine to create a 28-night trans-Pacific crossing, visiting 11 destinations.

The same sailing can also be experienced at the other end of the season, with the return trip from Sydney departing Apr 2016.

For the ultimate Australia/NZ

experience, clients can combine an 18-night Auckland to Perth cruise, departing 14 Feb 2016 with a 17-night sailing from Perth to Sydney via Bali to create a 35-night circumnavigation.

*Celebrity Millennium* will also call on Australia at the end of its fourth consecutive Asia season, operating a range of 14-night itineraries from Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo to other ports in Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Indonesia and Taiwan.

At season's end, *Millennium* will reposition to Vancouver via Australia and the Pacific.

Options include a 16-night Singapore to Sydney cruise and an 18-night Sydney to Honolulu via Lautoka, Suva, Bora Bora, Moorea and Papeete.

The newly announced "Suite Class" experience is available on cruises beginning Apr 2015, offering a dedicated restaurant and lounge, with complimentary premium beverages, specialty restaurant dining and unlimited internet access.

To celebrate the launch of Celebrity's 2015-16 World Tour, guests can receive up to US\$400 bonus onboard credit for new season bookings of four nights or longer (excluding *Celebrity Xpedition* sailings) made by 30 Apr.

For more information, head to [www.celebritycruises.com.au](http://www.celebritycruises.com.au).

### Sun Coast "test drive"

**MOOLOOLABA** on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland will become the newest destination for P&O Cruises from Aug this year as part of a "test drive" for the line's range of Short Break cruises.

The new destination was announced yesterday by P&O Cruises in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast Council.

Departing 14 Aug, the four-night food & wine themed Short Break sailing from Sydney aboard *Pacific Pearl* will call in to the Sunshine Coast port, with fares priced from \$499 per person quad share.

P&O Cruises senior vice president Tammy Marshall said the line was always on the hunt for new Short Break destinations.

"We know from experience in cruising from Sydney to Moreton Island that our passengers love their short breaks to include a feature destination," she added.

### CCC Rhino promotion

**CAPTAIN** Cook Cruises has launched a Facebook promotion in line with the line's involvement in the Taronga Wild Rhino project.

To enter, upload a photo with "Keratin Collectibles", the CCC-sponsored Rhino at Circular Quay Jetty 6 before 28 Apr.

Up for grabs are double passes on CCC's Hop-On-Hop-Off Sydney Harbour Explorer cruises.

### Nordic cruise savings

**SCANDINAVIAN** tour operator Bentours is offering a 50% saving on companion fares on a six-day Classic Voyage South, travelling from Kirkenes, navigating the Norwegian coastline and passing the Lofoten Islands.

The itinerary is priced from \$2,328 per couple not factoring in the discount, which is available for a limited time.

Travel agents can also earn \$200 Coles/Myer vouchers for being one of the top ten sellers of Bentours product during Apr.

#### Three pages today

Today's issue of *TD Cruise Update* features three pages of all the latest cruise information.

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## The Matrix of the Cruise Industry

AZAMARA Club Cruises' President Larry Pimentel last week spoke about the *Azamara Quest* spending two months in Australia during 2015, a decision based primarily on Australia's growing market.

This is not the first company to send ships to us because of our culture's engagement with cruise holidays - and with somewhere in the vicinity of 2,000 ports capable of receiving cruise ships around the world, our market is in a very fortunate position.

We do however have challenges in the future keeping this domestic boom strong; there are literally tens of thousands of people that are dependent on our results.

The cruise industry matrix (those that benefit from cruise business) is larger than you think. These include ground handlers, terminal and port operators around the country, and retail agencies.

They also include all those cruise suppliers with commodities such as food, beverages, fuel, provisions, etc. Yes, even a cruise ship needs to get its laundry powder and soap supplies from somewhere.

Other sectors affected include aviation, hundreds of tour and attraction providers, the dining sector, hoteliers and planners - all are directly affected, and their economic outcomes further offset the rest of our economy who may not even know what a ship is. We live in a commercial microorganism.

As CLIA grows, it is so good to see the collaboration of so many varied businesses, some of whom have joined our Executive Partner Program. These companies are helping support an industry that holds so much importance to others.

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## Silver Discoverer's Aussie debut



**DEBUTING** in sparkling weather conditions, Silversea Cruises' new expedition vessel *Silver Discoverer* (pictured above) yesterday set off from Broome on its inaugural departure, with some lucky travel agents taking part in the celebrations.

The vessel is the latest addition to the line's expedition fleet, with the Kimberley itineraries signalling a continued strong focus for the cruise line on the fast-growing Australian luxury cruise segment.

Silversea gm Karen Christensen told **TD Cruise Update** the 120-guest all-suite vessel will now head north, spending ten days exploring the staggering landscapes of the Kimberley Coast, as well as taking in a visit to Indonesia's Leti Island, before arriving in Darwin.

"Over the past 20 years, our company has developed a reputation for exploring exotic locales - the kinds of places that most travellers can only dream



about," she said. "It seems only fitting that this latest addition to our fleet will be sailing to what are arguably some of the world's most remote, most pristine, and least explored regions," Christensen added.

After their daily explorations, those on board will be pampered in ocean-view suites with gourmet cuisine, personal butler services and a wide selection of on-board amenities including complimentary beverages.

**Pictured above** during the inaugural celebrations are, from left: Julie Lambert, Travelworks; Ann Hope, Silversea; Sandy Greenwood, Travel Directors; Karen Christensen, Silversea and Jo-Anne Francis from Global Travel Solutions.

## Speeding in Monaco

**CRYSTAL** Cruises has released two new Crystal Adventures shore experiences timed to coincide with the 2014 Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix.

Guests on the 12-day Venice to Barcelona voyage departing 18 May aboard *Crystal Serenity* can purchase access to dedicated grandstand for the race, located near the start/finish line and also including catered lunch.

Alternatively, guests can mingle with the stars at a VIP nightclub experience following the race, with Crystal offering access to a limited number of VIP tables.

The new excursions come as a result of *Serenity's* overnight port stay in Monaco during the race.

## Triple the Cunard fun

**ONLINE** cruising retailer [ecruising.travel](http://ecruising.travel) has released a unique itinerary allowing guests to sail on all three Cunard Queens in one holiday in celebration of the line's 175th anniversary in 2015.

Leaving Australia on 01 May next year, the first cruise is the seven-night "Lusitania Remembered" Southampton round-trip voyage aboard the *Queen Victoria*.

This is followed by the 16-night "Baltic and Tribute to Liverpool" sailing aboard *Queen Elizabeth*.

The final journey is a classic Transatlantic voyage from the UK to New York on *Queen Mary 2*.

**MEANWHILE**, *Queen Elizabeth* has made its maiden call in Vietnam's Halong Bay as part of its latest global circumnavigation which included multiple ports of call in Australia.

The liner is into the final third of its 118-night world voyage, back into Southampton on 09 May.

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## Scenic Tours in a guide shortage



**SCENIC** Tours believes its plans to expand river cruising in France is going to pose some real challenges when it launches its new 10-night cruise program from Bordeaux in 2015.

“Bordeaux will be our newest river cruise destination, but at the moment there are not enough trained guides to assist passengers,” said Ana Jarak, who contracts for Scenic Tours in Europe.

Speaking to **TD Cruise Update** at the Rendez-vous en France trade show in Clermont-Ferrand, Jarak said there are five cruise companies already fighting for more guides and there are new players such as Uniworld and Viking also starting up soon that will only add to the problem.

“It’s also getting too crowded for some destinations who don’t have, or won’t support new infrastructure along the rivers,” Jarak added.

She said Bordeaux is building an extra pontoon in the city centre & that is a key element for Scenic.

“We’re getting there,” she said.

Scenic’s French River cruises will start and end in Bordeaux, cruising along three rivers, the Dordogne, Garonne and Gironde.

“We’ll be the only 5-star operator offering five ports, such as Bordeaux, famous for its wine, Cadillac for its Sauternes, Libourne for its Saint Emilion wines and Blaye, a UNESCO-listed city noted not just for its wine, but heritage,” noted Jarak.

**TD Cruise Update** also spoke to Nicolas Martin, gm of Bordeaux Tourism who said river cruising to the famous wine destination is growing rapidly.

“Three years ago, we only had one ship, it went to four this year and next year we’ll have eight boats entering Bordeaux”, he said.

“We also have big ocean ships calling in with 30,000 passenger arrivals last year and we’re expecting this to jump to 40,000 this year,” added Martin.

**Pictured** above at Rendez-vous en France from left is Vicki Bacic, Scenic Tours, Europe; Emilie Hess, Atout France, Sydney and Ana Jarak from Scenic Tours, Europe.

## Nat Geo air credits

**LINDBLAD** Expeditions is offering an air credit of \$1,000pp for all new bookings on two new voyages aboard the rebranded *National Geographic Orion* on a range of departures this year.

Eligible itineraries include the 14-day Papua New Guinea to Fiji, an 18-day Fiji to Tahiti voyage & a 19-day Tahiti to Easter Island, prices starting from \$12,550ppts, each featuring activities including snorkelling & glass-bottom boats.

Bookings must be made by 30 Jun to receive the air credit - see [www.expeditions.com](http://www.expeditions.com) for details.

## Latest deals from RCI

**THIRD** and fourth passengers in a single cabin can cruise by paying only taxes and gratuities as part of a new Family promo released by Royal Caribbean International.

The offer is valid on six sailings on *Voyager, Rhapsody & Radiance of the Seas* during their next Australian season next summer.

Onboard credits up to US\$200 are available with Celebrity Cruises as part of farewell season festivities for *Celebrity Century*.

Double cabin upgrades are also on offer on selected Azamara Club Cruises trips if booked by 31 May.

## Five star days at sea

**PASSENGERS** who enjoy luxury filled days at sea can experience eleven of them in succession as part of a 15-day repositioning of the *SeaDream II* vessel from Mumbai to Athens.

The sailing departs on 24 Apr, with staterooms priced from US\$5,524ppts - for more details, visit [www.seadream.com](http://www.seadream.com).

## Scenic Russia preview

**SPECIAL** offers including a \$200 onboard credit per couple are on sale for a limited time as part of a 2015 Russia river cruising pre-sale from Scenic Tours.

Departures of the 15-day Imperial Jewels of Russia river cruise between St Petersburg and Moscow will be operated by *Scenic Tsar*, the line’s 112-pax small ship, with guests spending four days in each city.

For details, phone 1300 723 642.



**BRITISH** retailer Cruise.co.uk got in on the April Fool’s gags, revealing amusing plans of the introduction of submarine cruising to take tourists to explore the undersea depths, starting from next year.

Travelling with up to 1,000 people per trip, the submarine will travel up to 60m below the surface - nothing too extreme - to admire the scenery and underwater wildlife menagerie.

The submarine itself is quite a feat of engineering, offering a “viewing deck”, restaurants, miniature indoor waterpark & many more aspects expected of a normal cruise holiday.

A plethora of entertainment onboard is also available for when the view gets too boring.



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**Postal address:** PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia  
**Street address:** 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia  
**P:** 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) **F:** 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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**Advertising and Marketing:** Christie-Lee Lachance, Lisa Martin and Magda Herdzik  
Email: [advertising@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@traveldaily.com.au)  
**Business Manager:** Jenny Piper  
Email: [accounts@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accounts@traveldaily.com.au)

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**Publisher/Managing Editor:** Bruce Piper  
**Editor:** Louise Goldsbury  
**Production Editor:** Matt Lennon  
**Contributors:** Guy Dundas and Olivia Archbold  
Email: [info@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:info@traveldaily.com.au)



