



Berlitz heads upriver

RIVERS are a-quiver with the impending release of the first 'Berlitz: River Cruising in Europe', which threatens to "cut through the brochures' hype".

Authored by Douglas Ward, who is known for 'Berlitz Cruising & Cruise Ships', the best-selling annual guide to ocean cruising (its 30th edition will be published in Sep), the new book reviews more than 200 river vessels.

"Almost every river cruise company promises you luxury, but what does 'luxury' really mean?", the promotional material asks.

"The guide gives you unbiased advice on the different kinds of river vessels and the facilities they offer, helping you to make an informed choice."

The reviews, which also cover accommodation, food and design, include ratings for each ship.

Ward concentrates on ships on seven rivers: the Danube, Rhine, Rhone, Seine, Elbe, Po and Douro, with overviews of main ports and sights along those waterways.

Other chapters include 'Lifting the lid on what the dining experience is really like', 'Booking and budgeting – any hidden extras?', 'What the brochures don't say', and 'Dream getaway or a claustrophobic holiday nightmare – the pros and cons of river cruising'.

On the positive side is: '10 good reasons to take a river cruise,' 'A day in the life of a rivership,' and 'Barge cruising – the essentials of life in the slow lane'.

'Berlitz: River Cruising in Europe', published by Berlitz Publishing, is available for purchase via online booksellers.

Program set for CDU 2014

REGISTRATIONS are now open for the annual Cruise Down Under trade conference, running from 03-05 Sep and to be hosted by Crown Perth in Western Australia.

Sponsoring Cruise Down Under for 2014 will be Tourism Western Australia, Fremantle Ports, City of Fremantle & Experience Perth and is titled "Beyond gateway ports - Navigating new destinations".

The hallmark yearly event for the Australian cruising industry will feature plenary sessions, workshops & industry gatherings.

Confirmed guest speakers will include Princess Cruises director development planning Crystal Morgan, Fred Olsen Line contracts manager Colleen Crisp and Carnival UK head of port operations Steven Young.

Organisers say the key industry conference will "offer you the opportunity to further your knowledge of the industry and gain a first-hand understanding of this continuously expanding and highly competitive market".

Sessions will cover a wide range of prevalent industry topics with a focus on discovering opportunities in new destinations.

Other topics to be canvassed include itinerary development, shore excursions, contracts, pre and post cruise opportunities, infrastructure, economic benefits

and looking outside the realm of traditional gateway ports.

Cruise Down Under remains the preeminent cruise industry event for the Australasian market, with registration open to CDU members and non-members.

For details on the program or to register to attend, **CLICK HERE**.

Costa to absorb Ibero

AT A travel agent conference aboard the *Costa Luminosa* last month, Costa Cruises ceo Michael Thamm reportedly announced the transition of Ibero Cruises (Ibero Cruceros) into the Costa brand by the end of the year.

Ibero Cruises, which is already under the executive control of Costa and owned by Carnival Corp, has only two ships but is Spain's second largest cruise line.

Costa has stated Ibero would continue to operate under its own brand until at least the end of 2014 when the *Grand Celebration* will be renovated to coordinate with the Costa fleet.

The ship, expected to be renamed *Costa Celebration*, has received a new white hull design, according to a report by *Cruise Currents*.

Ibero's other ship, *Grand Holiday*, is tipped to be transferred from the Ibero fleet or sold before the transition is finalised.

After Ibero is "absorbed", Thamm said Costa will increase its calls in Spanish ports by 6% compared to 2013, and more docking slots in Barcelona would be assigned to the new *Costa Diadema* throughout 2015.

Starwood part of CLIA

GLOBAL hotel giant Starwood Hotels & Resorts has been named as the latest executive partner of CLIA Australasia, with gm Brett Jardine touting "boundless" opportunities as a CLIA partner.

Already a long-term member of CLIA in the US, the decision to link with CLIA Australasia comes following Starwood's visit to Cruise3sixty Australasia in Feb.



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Illuminating issue

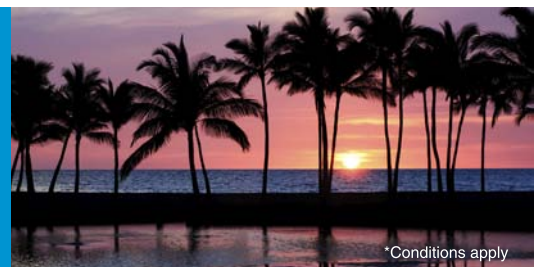
Today's issue of *TD Cruise Update* features four pages of all the latest cruise news plus a **full page of photos** from the launch of *Avalon Illumination*.



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Change of season

OUR first week of winter also means the first week of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, and cruise lines are in position for another busy season.

It actually brings up a type of cruise that is often overlooked, but can often be a real bargain; "repositioning cruises".

These generally occur at the end of a season with a voyage from one cruise area to the start of the next season in another.

For example: Ships relocating from the Caribbean to Alaska in April/May or vice versa toward the end of the Alaska season in late August or September. These itineraries may only occur twice a year so cruise lines find they are not always worth marketing.

For your clients, repositioning cruises can often visit ports of call that ships wouldn't normally visit, coupled with extra days at sea to enjoy the ship, and normally have the lowest pricing per deim's of the year. I also find the fervor of the crew is at its highest as they also look forward to another part of the world to explore.

Other examples include ships relocating from the Caribbean to Europe with a Trans-Atlantic crossing; from South America to the Mediterranean; from Asia to the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal; Alaska to Australia via Asia and of course Trans-Pacific crossings between Australia, New Zealand & North America.

Start preparing now for the end of our Wave Season in March/April - yes that's right, with 6-9 months being the most popular lead booking time, now is a great time to start promoting these special types of cruise holiday experiences.



Australia key for Avalon

AVALON Waterways md Patrick Clark has signalled further growth in the river cruise line's fleet, with the company expected to make a decision about more newbuilds in coming months.

Clark this week took part in the official christening ceremony of *Avalon Illumination* in Vienna, Austria, with Australian celebrity Deborah Hutton performing the honours (**Travel Daily** yesterday).

Illumination is Avalon's eighth 'Suite Ship' featuring two full decks of panoramic cabins, and the concept has proven popular with the Australian market.

Speaking at the launch, Clark said the Suite Ship was the result of a project started in 2009 to create a new generation of European river cruise ships.

"An overriding requirement of the design was that it had to meet the expectations of customers in Australia and New Zealand," he added.

That led to the launch of *Avalon Panorama* and the rest of the fleet, with a further two similar ships to debut in 2015 making a total of ten, plus five older vessels.

All of the Suite Ships have been built by Dutch shipyard Den Breejen and such is the strength of the market that Clark told a Den Breejen representative: "we're going to keep you busy, we hope, for some years to come".

Avalon is almost 100% booked

Aurora museum floats

AURORA Expeditions will open a floating exhibition for two years aboard *Polar Pioneer* showcasing iconic images from Frank Hurley's part in Sir Ernest Shackleton's trans-Antarctic trek of 1914-1917.



for 2014, with Clark also paying tribute to the company's travel agent partners.

"Thank you for the confidence you have in our brand...without you these ships would be pretty empty," he said.

Pictured above at the launch in Vienna are, from left: Stewart Williams, Globus Family of Brands md Australasia; Brett Jardine, gm of CLIA Australasia; Phil Hoffmann, Phil Hoffmann Travel; Deborah Hutton; and Barry Brown, Emirates Senior Divisional Vice President Commercial Operations East.

More photos from the glittering christening on the **next page**.

Concordia scrap date

THIRTY months after running aground and capsizing off the coast of Italy, *Costa Concordia* will be towed to Genoa for scrapping on 20 Jul, it has been confirmed.

According to Italian business newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Costa Crociere bosses opted for Genoa to scrap the ship as it was close, despite a competitive bid process from a variety of foreign firms.

The fragility of the ship and the short distance to Genoa - around 280km or five days towing time - led to the decision to award the job to an Italian scrapping yard.

Costa Crociere, a brand owned by Carnival Corporation, has spent more than €1.1 billion (AUD\$1.6 billion) on the salvage operation, with another €100m to be spent on the scrap process.

Cruising into Monaco

WINDSTAR Cruises has released a special 8-day 'Grand Prix of Monaco' itinerary departing 19 May 2015 aboard *Wind Surf* and inclusive of a two-day race ticket.

Priced from \$7,511ppts, the voyage also includes a variety of Formula One themed parties & events - book on 1300 857 437.

Travel Daily **CRUISE UPDATE**

on location aboard

Avalon Illumination

Today's issue of **TD Cruise Update** is coming to you courtesy of **Avalon Waterways** and the **Austrian National Tourist Office**.

THE inaugural *Avalon Illumination* cruise has taken its guests on a journey up and down Vienna's mighty Danube River, with stunning weather making for ideal conditions to experience the picturesque Wachau Valley.

Following the christening celebrations yesterday, pax were treated to a fabulous seven course celebratory degustation, and then *Illumination* set sail for Weisskirchen.

Optional activities this morning included a cycling tour, wine tasting or sightseeing before the ship relocated to Durnstein for a walking tour with a local guide, where each passenger was provided with a headset and commentary system.

Then it was on to Rossatz for a party at an historic castle before boarding again for some well-earned rest and heading to Bratislava overnight.

TDCU's sister publication **Cruise Weekly** has released a "photo blog" with some great pics from the launch ceremony - **CLICK HERE** to view.

To view our exclusive video summary of the proceedings - including the obligatory bubbly smash - click the logo or see traveldaily.com.au/videos.



Deborah does Danube!

AUSTRALIAN personality Deborah Hutton admitted to a few nervous moments in the lead-up to the christening of *Avalon Illumination* in Vienna earlier this week.

Hutton is one of a host of Aussies on board, including key Avalon Waterways partners, dignitaries, travel agents and media.

There were high expectations about the christening ceremony and particularly the importance of making certain that the bottle of sparkling wine actually smashed on the bow.

Fortunately due to an elaborate pulley arrangement, the deed was as simple as cutting a ribbon (right).

Hutton launched *Illumination* with the immortal words: "May all who sail on this splendid vessel enjoy their voyage and take home with them the joy and enrichment of a shared journey".

The ship then set off on a three day voyage to Budapest, where it will dock tomorrow night.

These pics were taken during the christening celebrations - lots more at www.facebook.com/traveldaily.

BELOW: Jilly and Roger Ringwood, Almond Breeze with Stewart Williams, Globus Family md and Danni Newman, Flight Centre Travel Group.



ABOVE: Gerhard Skoff, Danube Tourist Commission with Christian Schweitzer, Globus Family of Brands marketing manager.

BELOW: The christening ceremony was conducted in Austrian style, complete with a Viennese waltz.



LEFT: Some of the Globus team: Chris Hill, Laura Hewitt and Troy Ackerman.

ABOVE: Julia Casteleijn, Just Cruises with Hilary Weir and Keith Arnold, Harvey World Travel Garden City.

Cruise lines pound the pavement



TRAVEL agents up and down the NSW coast from Brisbane to Sydney are now experts in cruising after a week-long sales blitz by the BDMs of Carnival Australia's World's Leading Cruise Lines.

Representatives from all seven brands under the WLCL banner collectively visited agents up and down the coast, promoting the range of cruises in the group.

Brands featured under the WLCL umbrella include Carnival Cruise Lines, Holland America Line, Seabourn, Princess Cruises, P&O Cruises, Cunard and P&O Cruises World Cruising.

Pictured above under the WLCL

Milestone for Oceania

OCEANIA Cruises has received its one-millionth reservation, with the milestone booking made by a travel agent based in Atlanta, USA.

Company founder Frank Del Rio praised the travel industry for its contributions in helping to reach the mark, adding he was humbled at the loyalty shown by guests.

umbrella (in gorgeous sunshine) from left is Sissel Way, Carnival Cruise Lines; Jess O'Brien, P&O Cruises, Cunard and P&O Cruises World Cruising; Helen Courias, Princess Cruises & Helen Eves from HAL and Seabourn.

New Pandaw portal

FEATURING a refreshed look and navigation along with more pictures, Pandaw River Expeditions has launched its new website, optimised for viewing on desktop, mobile & tablet devices.

The new www.pandaw.com site features detailed information on the line's deck plans, river stops, cruise itineraries, onboard facilities and services and offers real-time stateroom availability.

MEANWHILE, Pandaw has released a new range of short Pagan to Mandalay one- and two-night river cruises in Burma, travelling between the two ports on the colonial *RV Orient Pandaw*.

Departures start from Sep 2015 and visit Pakokku and Yandabo.

Evergreen webinars

ONLINE training sessions on Evergreen Tours' new river cruise and ocean cruise product in USA & Canada will be covered in a series of online webinars to take place on Wed 11 Jun.

Products featured in the tour operator's 2015 USA and Canada brochure, released to the market last month, will be covered.

Three sessions will take place, at **8am** and **10am** AEST, with another at **8am** west coast time.

A place on a USA & Canada tour will be up for grabs to agents who tune in to view the webinar.

Click on the preferred timeslot above to register your details.

Revamp on Volendam

HOLLAND America Line will install 21 new Lanai staterooms on its 1,432-passenger *Volendam* during drydock works set for Dec.

The line has already installed the innovative new Lanai staterooms on *MS Maasdam*, *MS Rotterdam* and the *MS Veendam*.

A number of existing outside staterooms will be converted into the new cabins, which offer direct access to the Lower Promenade walking deck via a sliding door, each fitted with a one-way mirrored coating for privacy.

Occupants of each Lanai cabin also enjoy reserved deck chairs.

The Dec drydock period will also see all suite bathrooms upgraded to offer whirlpool bathtubs, stone vanities and new fittings.

A number of categories will also be fitted with walk-in showers.

Other work to be carried out will include the installation of new Mix contemporary bar areas themed to suit different drinks.

123 Go! Celebrity sale

CELEBRITY Cruises has relaunched its 123 Go! promotion, with guests booking Oceanview cabins or higher on *Celebrity Century* for 2014/15 Australasian departures able to choose two out of three bonus inclusions.

The selection includes a Classic Beverage Package, free gratuities or up to US\$300 onboard credit.

Offers apply to departures of three nights or longer, if booked by 21 Jun, with fares starting at \$1,199pp for a seven-night sailing.



HOW'S this for serendipity?

Just as the christening ceremony for the new *Avalon Illumination* (**TD** yesterday) was approaching its climax, some of those on board spotted a passing river cruise vessel (pictured below).

In a most curious coincidence, it turns out that the newest ship in the Avalon fleet was being named just as its first ever vessel, now cruising with another company, passed by on the Danube at the same time.

The ship which originally cruised as *Avalon Artistry*, launching Avalon Waterways in 2004, has now been passed onto German operator DCS Cruises, where she operates under the name *Amethyst*.



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