



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Wi-Fi technology

I AM certainly no expert on wi-fi technology when it comes to land based operations let alone cruise ships, however, I can share with you some insight into what is being developed to ensure cruise wi-fi connectivity continues to improve.

We all know that accessing the internet and email whilst at sea can be challenging and generally quite expensive!

Given satellite technology does not arrive onboard cheaply for the cruise line, it is no surprise that costs are passed down to the end user and if (potentially) hundreds of passengers using the same bandwidth concurrently, the speed of access (or lack of) is also understandable.

Challenging developers and technology companies to re-think the delivery of onboard connectivity will help to retain repeat cruisers as well as connect with future customers.

Wi-Fi connectivity on ships today is via stationary orbit satellites that are positioned around 35,000 km's from Earth.

Future thinking suggests that satellites could be moved almost four-times closer to earth, putting them in what's referred to as a low- or middle-earth orbit.

With the distance cut down so dramatically, this has the potential to deliver wi-fi capacity that could start to rival what fibre can deliver shore-side – wow!



RCI deploys *Legend* to Qld

FOR the first time ever, four Royal Caribbean International vessels will operate in Australian waters, with the line yesterday announcing it will send *Legend of the Seas* to homeport in Brisbane.

The 2,000-passenger ship will be based at the Brisbane Cruise Terminal at Portside Wharf for a five month season from Dec next year, increasing available local cruise capacity from Qld by 47%.

Over 11 decks, *Legend of the Seas* offers 915 staterooms for 2,074 guests, with recreational facilities including two swimming pools, four whirlpools and eight bars, clubs and lounges.

The ship is currently cruising in Europe and the Caribbean, and will sail a short season in Asia prior to its Brisbane relocation.

On sale later this month, *Legend* will operate 17 itineraries ranging from 2-14 nights to the South Pacific, New Zealand and north along the Queensland coastline.

Repositioning cruises from Hong Kong to Brisbane and return at each end of the season will also be available to book.

Royal Caribbean regional vice-president Asia-Pacific Gavin Smith said the ship's addition was the logical next step of the line's

Scenic France cruising

A DEDICATED brochure focusing on river cruising in France has been launched by Scenic Tours.

All three French regions visited by the operator feature in the guide including the Rhône and Saône rivers and Bordeaux.

Details on the "personality" of each region and its range of experiences, landscapes, food and wine and natural wonders.

A number of combination cruises are also available for pax wishing to link itineraries together.

Four Scenic 'Space Ships' will operate in France next year including Scenic Diamond which is being relocated to Bordeaux.

growth in Australia.

"This move comes off the back of strong demand from both the local and international guests and represents another major investment by Royal Caribbean in the Australian cruise market.

"Our Sydney and now Brisbane vessels represent the largest investment made by a cruise line in Australia and demonstrate our absolute commitment to the local cruise market," Smith added.

In addition to cruise revenue, the deployment of *Legend* in Brisbane is also expected to generate up to \$30 million in cruise-related economic impact to the city in pre- and post-cruise accommodation and visitation.

Also making its debut in Australia in the 2015/16 season will be *Explorer of the Seas*, which will be based in Sydney alongside sister ship *Voyager of the Seas* and fellow fleet member *Radiance of the Seas*.

Greek ferry bookings

INTERNATIONAL Rail has opened reservations on Greek inter-island ferry bookings

Routes popular with Australian travellers including the five-hour Athens to Mykonos is priced from \$78 per person and is able to be confirmed instantly - for more details, phone 1300 387 245.

NCL stuck in the mud

TUGBOATS have been forced to tow the *Norwegian Breakaway* into its berth at New York City's Pier 88 after the giant vessel became stuck in the Hudson River and reaching its dock 3 hours late.

The 4,500-passenger vessel was ending its latest seven-day voyage to the Bahamas and Florida when a strong current trapped the ship.

A possibility that the delay was caused by steering & propulsion problems after a collision with a 45ft whale are being investigated.

Special CU today!

Today's issue of *TD Cruise Update* features three pages of all the latest cruise news as well as a special Celebrity Interview with Gavin MacLeod from *The Love Boat* - see **pg 2**.

RCI 2015/16 on sale

AFTER a short delay due to a technical issue, Royal Caribbean International has released its entire 2015/16 season on sale.

Along with repositioning sailings, voyages to the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australian cruises will make up the season, operated by a record four ships.

Savings of up to \$1,000 per person are available for bookings made prior to 31 Dec 2014.

Fares start from \$1,099 for an eight-night South Pacific voyage aboard *Radiance of the Seas*.

New Uniworld vessel

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises has announced it will add a new Super Ship, with the S.S. Maria Theresa to join the fleet in the 2015 northern spring season.

It will operate on the line's European Jewels itinerary from Budapest to Amsterdam and on Christmas Holiday Market cruises.

New CLIA partners

CLIA Australasia has announced the addition of two new executive partner members to its ranks.

Outbound group tour wholesaler Kuoni Group Travel and CLIA UK & Europe representative for Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, Cruise Abroad, are the newest executive partners.

"A CLIA membership is a valuable asset at this time of expansion in our region's cruise industry and we're thrilled to be offering our new members the support and knowledge they need to get the most out of the current climate of growth," CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said.

Carnival to Brisbane, Asia

CARNIVAL Spirit will sail between Brisbane and Singapore next year as part of Carnival Cruise Lines' first ever visits to Asia, while *Carnival Legend* will sail between Hawaii and Sydney.

The new program for *Spirit*, replacing existing South Pacific itineraries, kicks off with a 15-day Sydney to Singapore cruise departing 01 Aug 2015, travelling via Lombok, Bali, Brisbane, the Whitsundays and Darwin.

The return 15-day voyage from Singapore to Sydney departs 30 Aug, with both priced from \$1,049 per person quad share.

Queenslanders will also get their first chance to travel with Carnival without first flying to Sydney, by boarding *Spirit* in Brisbane on 03 Aug for a 13-day sailing to Singapore.

The return cruise can also be disembarked in Brisbane.

The ship's visit to Singapore will enable a two-week refurbishment and upgrade before her return to Australian waters.

Carnival Legend will offer an 18-day cruise from Sydney to Hawaii, departing on 20 Apr 2015 and visiting Fiji and Tahiti to end its inaugural season in Australia, as well as a spring sailing from Honolulu to Sydney in Sep 2015

when it returns to Australia for its second season.

On sale from 07 May, Hawaiian fares start from \$1,329 per person on a quad share basis for the eastbound voyage and \$1,399pp quad share westbound.

The Singapore cruises are now open for sale in Polar.

"We're excited to be able to offer our guests these longer itineraries which are perfect for travellers looking to visit some wonderful tropical destinations which are a bit further from home, while enjoying all Carnival has to offer onboard," Jennifer Vandekreeke, CCL vice-president Australia said.

See www.carnival.com.au.

Asher welcomes ships

VICTORIAN Minister for Tourism Louise Asher has welcomed the recent decision by P&O Cruises to operate new P&OSeaBreaks short cruises to Portland and the Mornington Peninsula.

P&O announced late last month (**CU** 29 Apr) it will make its maiden call to the port as part of a short break cruise from Sydney departing on 16 Mar 2015.

Asher said the government had been working with the line to see more Victorian ports added to cruise itineraries and that the visits would be a boon for jobs.

"Having more ships in Victorian waters means that there is a greater economic benefit to the state, as the vessels take on stores, provisions and fuel to complete their journey, thereby generating more jobs in Victoria".

A total of 86 cruise ship visits are booked for Vic during the 2014/15 season, with 70 already in place for 2015/16.

Asher added the Vic Govt was pleased cruise lines were keen to bring visitors to enjoy the state's major events, including the Australian Open tennis, Melbourne Food & Wine Festival and the Emirates Melbourne Cup.



GRAFFITI artists are clearly running out of space for their tagging in New Jersey.

A dead minke whale that washed up under a local pier in NJ during the night was found the next morning sporting the indignity of graffiti art placed by a local tag artist.

The whale was approx 12-15ft in length and had some purple letters spray-painted on its side - police are investigating to try and find who was responsible.

Celebrity Interview with Gavin MacLeod



SUAVE, sophisticated and charismatic, Gavin MacLeod holds a Hollywood resume that reads as a true superstar of global cinema & television.

MacLeod's most famous role is that of Captain Merrill Stubing on *The Love Boat*, a role he held through the show's entirety.

Airing from 1977 to 1986, the show was usually set aboard a Princess Cruises ship, leading to a natural

progression as a celebrity spokesperson and Ambassador for the line.

Earlier this year, MacLeod visited Australia to serve as a special guest for Princess Cruises at a series of Valentine's Day vow renewals aboard Sun Princess in Australia and New Zealand. While in Australia, he also dropped in as a surprise visitor to the inaugural Cruise360 Australasia industry trade show. MacLeod sat down with *Travel Daily* for an exclusive Celebrity Interview about his career and travel experiences.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Being the Captain on the TV show, *The Love Boat*, will remain a career highlight. It has brought me much happiness and joy and gave me the amazing opportunity to work with some incredibly gifted and talented actors. Playing the role of the captain also led to the opportunity to become an ambassador for Princess Cruises in 1986 which has been an absolute honour and has taken me to some wonderful places - including Australia.

What is your favourite holiday spot?

Lake Como in Italy was an incredible place that I travelled with my beautiful wife Patti after the launch of *Emerald Princess* in Athens, Greece. I'd love to go back there again and eat some more of the amazing food in that region.

What is one of the most exotic destinations you have travelled to?

Australia would have to be one of the most exotic places I've ever been too. I'm amazed by the wildlife and scenery, and the people are so friendly!

What is one thing you cannot leave home without?

A photograph of my wife, Patti. I take her photo with me everywhere.

What is the most common item you leave at home?

My favourite arm chair!

Do you have an embarrassing travel

story that you can share with us?

On my recent trip to Australia my trousers split right down the middle!! I think the food down under is too good - lucky I always pack plenty of clothes!

What is your best travel tip?

Don't forget your passport!

What features do you look for when choosing a hotel?

Good service - like I have been blessed with on Princess Cruises' ships - and a comfortable bed.

What is your favourite luggage item?

My crisp cream blazer which I wore on my recent trip to Australia to officiate at the vow renewal ceremonies onboard *Sun Princess*. It's one of my favourite items of clothing.

Who is one person you wish you could sit next to on a plane?

My manager and friend, Lee Mimms. He is one amazing travelling companion and we have so much fun travelling together.

What is one food you would like to see added to an airline or cruise ship menu?

Fettuccini Alfredo, which is one of the signature pasta dishes served on all Princess ships. I can't live without it, it's delicious.

Where are you planning on travelling next?

I'm a New Yorker at heart, so I'm keen to get back to that incredible city!



Win a Julie McCoy costume!

For fans of *The Love Boat*, today's **TD Cruise Update** is giving away three Julie McCoy Cruise Director costumes, thanks to Princess Cruises. To win, simply be one of the first three people to answer the following question correctly.

What was the name of Gavin MacLeod's character on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*?

Send your answers to:

theloveboat@traveldaily.com.au

Carnival serves up its own suds



FLOWING from the beer taps on Carnival Cruise Lines' two Sydney-based ships this season will be an exclusive new brew entitled Thirsty Frog Summer Ale.

The beer, launched last night in Sydney, will be produced by one of the Lord Nelson Hotel and craft brewery, located in The Rocks, especially for *Carnival Spirit* and will be available from next month.

Carnival Legend will also stock the beer once it arrives for its first Australian season on 22 Sep.

The decision to develop a unique beer for its Australian guests follows on from the Thirsty Frog Red ale which is on sale on Carnival Cruise Lines' 23 other ships sailing around the world.

CCL vice-president Australia Jennifer Vandekreeke told **TD Cruise Update** she is convinced the new brew will be popular with the line's Australian guests.

"We've had so much success with the 'Aussification' of the ship that every time we thought really carefully about what Aussies

want to enjoy onboard and made something that was right for this market, we got a great response so we decided to keep that going."

Vandekreeke is **pictured** above with Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel owner Blair Hayden.

New expedition ship

NORTH American expedition operator Adventure Canada will upgrade its fleet from the 2015 northern summer season, with a new ice-class ship to be inducted.

Sea Adventurer will be replaced by the *Ocean Endeavour*, purpose built for 198 passengers and features 20 zodiacs, lounges and a top deck observation room.

The vessel will be put to work exploring the Arctic, Greenland and Canada's East Coast, with its shallow draft allowing it access to more isolated fjords, remote and secluded communities and bays.

The ship was built in 1982 but was fully renovated & refurbished in 2010 and earlier this year.

Windstar debuts *Star Pride*

THE first of Windstar Cruises' three new luxury yachts was unveiled overnight at a ceremony in Barcelona, before its inaugural voyage through Spain, France, and Italy.

Star Pride, formerly *Seabourn Pride* prior to its purchase by Windstar last year (**TD** 20 Feb 2013), is the first vessel in 16 years to be launched by the company, which is undergoing a "transformation".

Hans Birkholz, ceo, Windstar Cruises, said *Star Pride* "leads the way as Windstar enters a new era of small ship cruising".

The ship's debut follows an intensive three-week revamp in which all of its public spaces, dining venues and suites were updated to meet Windstar's "casually elegant, warm, and contemporary style".

Windstar partnered with Alan McVitty and Trimline Interiors, who spearheaded the recent US\$18 million renovation of the line's sailing yachts, to complete *Star Pride's* stem-to-stern transformation in Barcelona.

Other updates to the décor include new furnishings, lighting, upholstery, wall coverings, carpets, ceiling finishes, window treatments and floor coverings.

Additionally, *Star Pride* introduced Windstar's new "Destination Suites", which showcases a signature Windstar destination, complete with cultural décor and local art work.

Windstar will eventually implement this new style of owner's suite fleet-wide.

The godmother was Nancy

Anschutz, wife of the owner of Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Windstar's parent company.

Star Pride will cruise the Mediterranean for the European summer, followed by new voyages in Asia and the Middle East.

The pier-side event was attended by 200 trade guests including Philip Anschutz, owner of Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Andy Todd, ceo of Xanterra Parks & Resorts; Hans Birkholz, ceo of Windstar Cruises and Captain Alan MacAry, a 15-year Windstar veteran who serves as master of *Star Pride*.

Voyages in the Med

BOUTIQUE luxury line Voyages to Antiquity has released its 2015 Mediterranean brochure covering its range of cruises for the season.

Sixteen new destinations will be visited during the period, with new ports in Spain, France, Morocco & Gibraltar to be used.

River cruising can also be combined with ocean cruising in the same voyage aboard the 380-passenger Aegean Odyssey, with a journey along Spain's Guadalquivir River also featured.

Hurtigruten kids free

CHILDREN under 15 years of age travelling with parents on any Hurtigruten Classic Norwegian Coastal Voyage departing from Jul-Sep 2014 will travel for free on a full board basis, the line said.

The offer is valid for bookings made before 31 May 2014 and valid in three and four berth cabins - phone 1800 623 267.

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