



Avalon videos France

AHEAD of the doubling of the line's capacity in France next year, Avalon Waterways has released a new video showcasing its river operations in the region.

The video looks at the scenery available to passengers in France as well as the onboard experience such as dining, art, culture and two new itineraries - **CLICK HERE**.

Sub-Antarctic guide

SILVERSEA Expeditions has launched a dedicated brochure covering the line's range of Sub-Antarctic voyages to the frozen continent and New Zealand.

The departures, ranging from 9-16 days, are scheduled to begin from Nov this year aboard *Silver Explorer* and *Silver Discoverer*, which recently made its debut.

"As *Silver Discoverer* navigates the World Heritage-listed Sub-Antarctic Islands and guests explore wildlife havens and meander New Zealand's charming coastlines, our experts will be on hand at all times, to ensure that our guests have the journey of a lifetime," Silversea Expeditions gm and sales/marketing director Karen Christensen said.

Expeditions operate over the 2014/15 summer season, with the brochure now available to order through TIFS.

APT boosts Kimberley 400%

ANTICIPATING hot demand for Kimberley cruises in 2015, APT has increased its available inventory by almost 400 percent.

The company revealed today it will also deploy its 110-passenger small ship *MS Caledonian Sky* to the region next year in place of *Coral Princess*, which is currently used along with the 72-pax *Oceanic Discoverer*, on which APT operates exclusive charters.

Rob Tandy, general manager for APT's Kimberley portfolio, said: "When we introduced the product to the trade this time last year, it sold out within four months."

He added that the expansion would be "sympathetic" to the environment and land owners.

"It's because of our depth of knowledge and strength of relationships that we feel confident that we can grow this product in a way that is both ethical and considerate towards the local environment and communities we visit, whilst also enabling our guests an exclusive

insight into this region that we love so much," Tandy added.

APT's new 2015 Kimberley Coast Cruising brochure, available from today, contains 14 itineraries ranging from 11 to 27 days, with most able to be matched up with one of six APT small group Kimberley Wilderness Adventures land tour (max 20 pax).

The two ships, chaperoned by an APT expedition leader, an expedition team and onboard expert lecturers, will sail in Australian waters between Broome and Darwin.

APT's Kimberley Coast Cruise itineraries are fully inclusive and cover all sightseeing, 'Signature Experiences', park and cruise fees, guides, meals and drinks with lunch and dinner.

Accommodation on the land tours include luxury lodges such as Home Valley Station, Drysdale River Station, Cable Beach Club Resort & Spa and El Questro's Emma Gorge Resort.

Prices for the 2015 Kimberley season start at \$9,945 per person for a ten-night cruise.

For 2015, APT is offering a range of SuperDeals which must be booked by 31 Jul 2014, including the chance to save up to \$3,000 per couple when combining a 4WD land tour with a cruise aboard *MS Caledonian Sky*.

For more information, visit www.aptouring.com.au/Kimberley.

Norwegian planning

MORE than \$250 million will be spent by Norwegian Cruise Line on its "Norwegian NEXT" cruise planning technology fleet-wide.

The investment will see NCL source and develop new onboard entertainment, guest activities, dining options, environmental commitments, destinations and ship revitalisation.

Features to be added to all ships include Sugarcane Mojito Bar, Carlo's Bake Shop and a range of new stagshows and attractions including the H2GLOW Party.

"The youngest fleet at sea continues to get even better with our robust enhancement program taking place over the next two years," ceo Kevin Sheehan said.

MEANWHILE, the line has today announced that passengers can make reservations for spa treatments and specialty dining venues up to 90 days prior to departure - double the previous booking window length.

Guests in suite staterooms and in the key-card access 'ship within a ship' complex, The Haven, can book dining as far as 100 days out.

Further, seats at specialist entertainment options onboard *Norwegian Breakaway*, *Norwegian Epic* and *Norwegian Getaway* can also be reserved 90 days ahead of boarding the ship.

These shows include Blue Man Group, Legally Blonde and Burn the Floor as well as dinner shows Cirque Dreams & The Illusionarium.

Cruise Update today

Today's issue of **TD Cruise**

Update features three pages of all the latest cruise information plus a Face to Face interview with Jeremy Lindblad - **see p4**.

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CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Local capacity

THE last few weeks have certainly provided some exciting news for the Australasian cruise industry, with increased capacity being announced as “on the way.”

With the speed the cruise industry is moving here, we will be face to face with plenty of beds to sell and a great opportunity to really stamp our presence on the global cruise stage.

We already have *Carnival Legend* and *Celebrity Century* arriving in late 2014 and now we can count on Royal Caribbean adding *Explorer of the Seas* and *Legend of the Seas* to their local fleet, Princess adding *Golden Princess* and P&O announcing they will be receiving two ‘dam’ ships from HAL to home-port here.

Then there was the *Azamara Quest* announcement last week which, combined with everything above, will see Australasia increasing local capacity by an extra 16,000+ beds – amazing!

We do say goodbye to *Rhapsody of the Seas* who has forged the way for RCCL in recent years but despite this, the net increase is still a big number!

If you are a retailer worried about how you are going to be up for the challenge of filling this extra capacity – don’t be! Let the cruise line analysts worry about this – you just need to ensure that cruise is a part of every conversation possible with potential clients.



RCCL Cruise Planner revamp

ROYAL Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises have developed an online tool that enables passengers to plan in advance for all restaurant reservations, drinks packages and shore excursions, freeing up their time onboard.

Enabled for desktops and tablets, the new Cruise Planner is said to allow guests to book all aspects of a cruise holiday more quickly and easily than in the past.

The format includes an easy-to-use menu, extensive search and filtering feature that makes it possible to research hundreds of products available on a specific booked itinerary, both on and off the ship.

Shore excursions can be searched by day, port, activity type, and number of guests.

It also displays a streamlined order history, shopping cart with a categorised summary, and printable colour-coded calendar for each member of the group.

In addition, the revamped planning tool also includes the new Dynamic Dining reservations system (CU 27 Mar) on *Quantum of the Seas* and *Anthem of the Seas*, with bookings now open.

“Planning a cruise should not be a complicated process,” said

Azamara sales boom

ROYAL Caribbean Cruise Lines says it has been pleased with the “strong response” to sales for Azamara Club Cruises’ inaugural Australian season in 2016.

“Since our announcement last week we have been pleased at the strong response and many enquiries that are coming through for these cruises, the line told **TD Cruise Update**.

“Australia is the largest growth market for Azamara Club Cruises - our guests love sailing on Azamara ships in Europe and Asia and we have no doubt they will enjoy immersing themselves in the beautiful destinations here in their own backyard.”

Adam Goldstein, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines president and chief operating officer.

“We have created a tool that is simple and intuitive to use and will transform our guests’ experience from the moment they begin planning their sailing.”

Changes can be made via the Cruise Planner up until four days prior to departure.

“Once they step onboard, we want our guests to have nothing to do but simply enjoy themselves, and Cruise Planner makes that possible,” he added.

To see the refreshed RCI Cruise Planner, **CLICK HERE**.

Celebrity Cruises’ platform will be live from 10 Jun.

Cruise Planner was developed in partnership with Isobar, a global digital marketing agency.

Legend goes on sale

CRUISES departing ex Brisbane on Royal Caribbean International’s *Legend of the Seas* have now gone on sale for its five month season sailing from the Qld city.

Fifteen cruises ranging in length from 2-18 nights will be operated to destinations in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific in the 2015/16 Australasian season, with fares starting at \$1,299ppts.

The ship will arrive 15 Dec 2015 after relocating from Hong Kong.

QE2 staff on strike

UKRAINIAN workers on the out-of-service *QE2* have gone on strike, saying they haven’t been paid for more than two months.

According to the *BBC*, owners QE2 Holding Ltd have blamed the political crisis in Ukraine for delays in paying the workers and dealing with crew rotation issues.

Qld agent to sail on Illumination



AMONG the passengers to take part in the official naming and christening ceremonies for Avalon Waterways’ new river cruise vessel *Avalon Illumination* next month will be Julia Casteleijn from Just Cruises Brisbane.

Opting to boost her cruising knowledge by earning a higher CLIA Australasia accreditation, Casteleijn said she was stunned to have won the Avalon prize.

Announced in Feb, the CLIA

promotion offered a chance to win the spot on the inaugural *Avalon Illumination* sailing to agents undertaking further training.

The newest Avalon Waterways vessel will be launched early next month in Vienna, Austria by Godmother Deborah Hutton before cruising to Budapest.

Casteleijn is **pictured** above right receiving her prize from Avalon Waterways Qld South area sales manager Shelley Martin.

HAL finalising ship transfers

EXACT details on when Holland America Line will move its *MS Ryndam* and *MS Statendam* into the P&O Cruises Australia fleet are still being finalised, the line said in a Q&A document today.

Expected to be around Nov 2015, *Ryndam* will relocate from Europe, while *Statendam* will conclude a season in Alaska prior to joining the P&O Australia fleet.

In the document, HAL advised any passengers whose sailings become affected once the official transfer date is confirmed will be contacted and able to rebook on another cruise or receive a refund without penalty.

HAL said it was working closely with crew members on both ships with the intention of assisting those who wish to remain with the line or move to P&O Cruises.

The announcement this week

will take P&O's local fleet to five vessels and Carnival's year-round presence to 12 ships in Australia.

Three months later, Holland America will replace the capacity lost by the transfer with the launch of its new 2,648-passenger Pinnacle-class vessel.

An announcement as to where this currently un-named ship will be deployed is expected to be made in coming months.

The arrival of *MS Ryndam* and *MS Statendam* into the P&O fleet in Australia was welcomed strongly by the entire industry.

Tourism & Transport Forum ceo Ken Morrison said the new ships will create new jobs in Australia.

"The addition of these ships will help to generate additional spending by passengers, as well as by Carnival Australia as it stocks up on provisions for its voyages".

The TTF said it was continuing to lobby for a more permanent arrangement for cruise ships to share Garden Island facilities.

"With additional ships based in Australia and with a growing number of ships simply too big to fit under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, steps must be taken to secure additional port facilities east of the bridge," Morrison said.

Long Quantum sailing

DETAILED information has been released on Quantum of the Seas' "Global Odyssey" cruise, in which it will relocate from New York to its new home in Shanghai.

The voyage will depart on 02 May from Cape Liberty, New Jersey and first cross the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal to the Persian Gulf and on to the Indian Ocean prior to arriving in Asia and Shanghai.

Ports to be visited will include Barcelona, Aqaba, Dubai, Muscat, Penang, Singapore & Hong Kong.

Shorter portions of the 52-night repositioning will be on sale from later this week, ranging in duration from three to sixteen nights.

Princess welcomes Regal addition



CUPCAKES and gifts from Princess Cruises president Jan Swartz were circulating around the Australian office of Princess Cruises this week in celebration of the debut of *Regal Princess*, the line's 18th ship in the fleet.

The gift, a souvenir *Regal Princess* glass paperweight, was handed out as a gift to all team members to mark the ship debut.

Princess Cruises Vice President Australia & New Zealand Stuart Allison said he knew the new ship would generate the same level of excitement as her sister vessel *Royal Princess*, which debuted in Jun last year and was christened by the Duchess of Cambridge.

Boasting capacity for 3,560 guests, Princess Cruises newest liner *Regal Princess* has set sail on

its inaugural voyage, departing from Venice for a week-long jaunt to the Mediterranean and Turkey.

Passengers will enjoy features such as an overwater SeaWalk platform, central atrium offering numerous restaurants & lounges, dancing fountains in the central pool, packed wine cellar & more.

The ship even offers an onboard television studio, pumping out unique content to passengers' staterooms during the voyage.

Pictured above with the cupcakes and gifts from left is Meg Koffel, Stuart Allison, Michele Oliver and Jodie Ryan from Princess Cruises.

Also **pictured** below is Princess Cruises president and ceo Jan Swartz with *Regal Princess* crew on the deck ahead of the voyage.



CRUISE passengers certainly have a fun sense of humour.

British retailer Cruise.co.uk recently sent a survey out to its online community asking them what they missed most about a cruise when compared to their everyday lives.

The question posed was "I know I'm back from a cruise because...", with responses very unique and entertaining.

A quarter of respondents said they missed the food, while the other popular answers were the relaxed lifestyle & attention to detail of cabin stewards.

Some responses were just downright funny, including: "When I order food to my room and the wife tells me to 'get real'", "my bathroom scales think I'm someone else" and "I don't wake up with a chocolate in my ear".



Face to Face: Jeremy Lindblad Business Development Director Australia - Lindblad Expeditions

Welcome to Face to Face, where we chat to cruise industry leaders.

Where do you see yourself and your company in five years?

In five years I see Lindblad Expeditions exploring even more remote and pristine places around the world with an increased focus on the undersea, and our conservation efforts in those regions, particularly our oceans' initiative.

What is the key to your success?

Lindblad Expeditions' success stems from our dedicated focus to our mission, which is to inspire people to explore and care about the planet.

How many cruises have you been on in the last year?

In the past year I have spent 25 days at sea and in the past five years I would have to say more than 150 days, including an epic 32-day expedition up the mid-Atlantic ridge from Ushuaia to Dakar.

What is your favourite destination, and why?

By sea, I would have to say South Georgia Island in the Southern Atlantic Ocean. This island, which we visit on many of our Antarctic itineraries is the resting place of Sir Ernest Shackleton and home to a single colony of 200,000 king penguins. There's no other place like it on earth!

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

In recent memory I would have to say a visit to Pentecost Island in Vanuatu on the inaugural voyage of the *National Geographic Orion* this past March. We had the privilege of spending five hours ashore with the famous land divers from the region, watching them perform this incredible feat of leaping off of a 25 metre structure with vines tied to their ankles.

How do you spend days at sea?

I spend my days at sea between the outer decks with our naturalists looking for marine life and sea birds, on the bridge with the captain and his mates looking at charts and in the lounge chatting with our guests, who always seem to amaze me with their sense of adventure and life stories. The second I begin feeling sea-sick, I grab a can of coke, a packet of crackers and head straight for the bridge where it's dark, quiet and well placed on the ship to mitigate the sea's movement.

What is the next "hot spot" in cruising destinations?

We have launched a series of expeditions from South Africa heading east through Madagascar, the Seychelles, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and ending in Indonesia that are incredibly compelling. Travelling through the northern Indian Ocean with a ship like the *National Geographic Orion*, searching for Blue Whales and diving in places like Baa Atoll excite me to no end. These will be the future 'hot spots' for adventurous travellers!



Jeremy's Cruise Favourites!

Ship: *National Geographic Orion* and her sister ship, *National Geographic Explorer*.

Ship Activity: Evening recap with our expedition team and guests.

Favourite region: The Poles.

Favourite shore excursion: Long hikes of any form.

Favourite port: Ushuaia.

Favourite onboard food/drink: Strong morning coffee to get me ready for a busy day.

Favourite perk of the job: Meeting incredibly interesting people on our ships.

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