

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 09 Mar 2017

## Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

## MSC for Me program

MSC Cruises has unveiled a fleet-wide digital innovation program, MSC for Me.

The program will provide guests with over 130 smart features, including a concierge and digital way finder that provides guests on board with advice, guidance and information on what's on.

Guests will also be able to preview excursions using virtual reality, access a planning tool on their mobile device and use a digital, personal advisor that will make suggestions based on personal preferences.

It will debut on *MSC Meraviglia*, when it comes into service in less than 90 days, before rolling out across all existing 12 ships and on future ships.

## Royal's new ship named

ROYAL Caribbean's newest vessel, set to launch Apr 2018, will be named *Symphony of the Seas* and be the largest cruise ship in the world.

At a whopping 230,000 gross registered tons and 362m long, the vessel will offer 28 more staterooms than her newest sister ship *Harmony of the Seas*.

*Symphony of the Seas* will include many of the features on *Harmony of the Seas*, including the seven-neighbourhood concept, the Bionic Bar, Broadway-calibre entertainment, the AquaTheater, the Perfect Storm trio of waterslides, and the tallest slide at sea.

The company is staying tight-lipped on the "new features and amenities" promised for the vessel, promoting it as the "most adventure filled ship".

*Symphony of the Seas* will spend her inaugural season

exploring the destinations of the Mediterranean, calling on ports in Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Florence/Pisa, Rome and Naples, Italy and Provence, France.

She will then arrive in Miami in early Nov to begin seven-night Eastern and Western Caribbean itineraries on 17 Nov from the "Crown of Miami", Terminal A.

Yesterday Royal Caribbean broke ground on the new PortMiami Terminal A, which upon completion will spread across 15,794m<sup>2</sup> and is being touted as "the most innovative cruise facility in the US".

It is anticipated that Royal Caribbean will generate at least 1.8 million passenger moves at PortMiami - 30% of the port's projected passenger traffic.

Bookings are now open for *Symphony of the Seas'* inaugural year of Europe and Caribbean itineraries.

## P&O Arabian Gulf

P&O Cruises UK has announced it will base a ship in the Arabian Gulf in 2019 for the first time.

Between 10 Jan and 04 Apr, the cruise line will offer five 10-night sailings from Dubai on *Oceana*, sandwiched by two positioning cruises of 20 and 14 nights.

Prices start at AU\$2,262pp with up to AU\$728pp on board credit. General sale opens 30 Mar.

## Foodies head to sea

A RECORD number of travellers are jumping aboard P&O Cruises' food and wine themed voyages, which now represent about 20% of the line's sea breaks each year.

Family groups currently account for a fifth of passengers booked on food and wine sailings while female groups represent a quarter.

P&O Cruises president Sture Myrmell attributed the growth to popular cooking shows and Instagram culinary inspiration.

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## Royal celebrates women



**THE** Women at Royal Caribbean Cruises in Australia and New Zealand used yesterday's International Women's Day to consider the company's growth over the past eight years.

"As we considered our team, we quickly realised that women

are very well represented in both the senior leadership team and the broader management team, working across the business from sales, marketing and communications to HR and operational roles," said director of sales & Marketing, Kathryn Valk.

"We're very proud of our women in leadership, and our diverse and inclusive work environment."

**Pictured** in the back row are: Danielle Riley, HR manager; Lisa Teiotu, sales planning & support manager; Claire Pillans, Celebrity & Azamara brand comms manager; Clarissa Williams, call centre account manager; Stephanie Moore, Royal Caribbean brand comms manager; Jen Sims, online performance mgr and Miranda Lethlean customer relations mgr.

In the front row: Mel Ryan, head of revenue & planning; Anna Bathgate, PR manager & Kathryn Valk director sales & marketing.

## Hapag names ships

**HAPAG-LLYOD** Cruises has revealed the names for its two new expedition ships set to launch in Apr and Oct 2019.

The two ships (**pictured** below) will be named *Hanseatic nature* and *Hanseatic inspiration*.

Both vessels will be identical and accommodate up to 230 passengers, or 199 passengers on Antarctic expeditions.

Each will boast three restaurants and an extensive wellness and fitness area, plus a marina for water sports.

The new expedition cruisers are being built by Norwegian company Vard Holdings Limited, with the ship being fitted out with eco-friendly engines & technology. For more pics, see **FACEBOOK**.



## Aussie to lead Muse

**SILVERSEA'S** forthcoming ship *Silver Muse* will be steered by Alessandro Zanello, the cruise line's youngest appointed Captain, when launched next month.

Zanello, a dual Australian and Italian national, will be joined by exec chef Anne-Mari Cornelius and cruise director Jimmy Kovel, all with extensive experience from across the line's luxury fleet.

*Silver Muse* will be christened in Monte Carlo on 19 Apr.

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## The wait continues

**THE** long awaited New South Wales Government's 25-year cruise plan is still in the works.

A spokesperson for Melinda Pavey, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, told **Cruise Weekly** the government was "finalising a long-term plan that sets out a vision for how the state can support the cruise industry and spread the benefits across New South Wales".

A Department of Premier and Cabinet Spokesperson told **CW** the plan would cover the full range of issues that affect the industry, including existing and new infrastructure options, destination management and regulation, and its financial contribution to NSW.

"These issues will be worked through with industry so we get it right," the spokesperson said.

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### RCI Bahamas deal

**ROYAL** Caribbean International will invest in the construction of a pier, additional guest features & amenities at CocoCay, a private island destination in the Bahamas.

Under an agreement, RCI will work with the government in The Bahamas to develop a training program to prepare Bahamian nationals for careers at sea and will up employment of locals.

### NCL escape room

**AN ESCAPE** room, Escape The Big Top, has been fitted on Norwegian Cruise Line's four newest ships.

The entertainment concept challenges guests to solve the clues and escape before time runs out and is available several times per cruise on *Norwegian Getaway*, *Norwegian Epic*, *Norwegian Breakaway* and *Norwegian Escape*.

Guests can reserve a spot at the box office once on board.

### Lindblad 2016 results

**LINDBLAD** Expeditions Holdings' net income took a dive of US\$14.7 million for the full year 2016 on the period prior, the company's financial results show.

Net income for 2016 was US\$5.1m, compared to US\$19.7m in 2015 with adjusted EBITDA in 2016 of \$41.7m, a decrease of 11% on 2015.

The company expects to see improvement in 2017 results with tour revenues of between US\$278-US\$284m and growth in EBITDA of US\$50-US\$52m.

### Crystal pres cruise

**CRYSTAL** Cruises' 2017 President's Cruise in Nov will feature an excursion from Aqaba, Jordan, to the mountainous region of Wadi Rum, which is still home to Bedouin tribes.

The itinerary also includes an overnight stay in Muscat in time for the Sultan's birthday celebrations.



**VIKING** Cruises yesterday launched two new river ships, *Viking Hild* and *Viking Herja*.

The vessels accommodate 190 passengers in 95 staterooms, including two Explorer Suites, seven two-room Veranda Suites, 39 veranda staterooms and 22 French balcony staterooms.

*Viking Hild* will sail the Rhine River from Apr on Viking's Paris to the Swiss Alps itinerary, and later this year both ships will sail Viking's Danube Waltz and Rhine Getaway itineraries.

The additions bring Viking's river fleet to 64 and the company plans to have a fleet of six ocean ships by 2019, making it the largest small ship ocean line.

Michelle Black, md Australia

and New Zealand, said Viking was thrilled to launch two new ships to the river cruise market.

"Since we debuted the Viking Longships, we have amassed consumer and industry acclaim including recognition from Cruise Critic," she said.

"All our river ships are designed with our guests' comfort in mind, offering sleek Scandinavian design and an abundance of space and natural light."

**Pictured** are: Bernard Meyer, Neptun Werft; Captain of *Viking Herja*; Debbie Wiseman, godmother to *Viking Herja*; Princess Stephanie, godmother to *Viking Hild*; Captain of *Viking Hild* and Torstein Hagen, chairman Viking River Cruises.



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For each adult booked by 31 Mar, agents will receive one free night for themselves or their travelling companion sharing an Ocean View room aboard the *RV Reef Endeavour*.

Free nights can be accumulated and redeemed by 31 Mar 19.



**THE** Carnival Australia team was out in force at yesterday's JITO Women for Women travel industry event in Sydney, which coincided with International Women's Day.

The large contingent were among 500 attendees at the full day event which inspired delegates to make the most of their opportunities and drive equality in the industry.

One of the keynote speakers was Carnival Cruise Line's Australia/NZ chief Jennifer Vandekreeke who spoke about her career, the challenges and excitement of establishing the brand in Australia and successfully operating two vessels in the local market.

Other presenters from the cruise sector included MSC Cruises' local head, Lynne Clarke, who described her journey including the early days of establishing MSC's passenger sales here where she would hear from the line's head office about once a month via fax.

Common threads from among the female industry leaders on the stage included a willingness to take risks, high levels of intelligence and participation

in a range of activities, and an incredible ability to juggle family and corporate life.

The day wrapped up with an inspirational presentation from athlete Turia Pitt, whose optimism and journey of recovery after being badly burned during a race five years ago captivated the audience.

The Carnival Australia attendees are **pictured** above, with lots more photos from the event at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://www.facebook.com/traveldaily).

## Carnival Pride verdict

**THE** National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has determined *Carnival Pride's* impact with a pier on 08 May in Baltimore, Maryland was due to the staff captain's errors during the docking manoeuvre and the captain's insufficient oversight.

*Pride* ran into the pier and elevated passenger embarkation walkway after the ship approached with too much speed and at too steep an angle, the NTSB report said.

The incident caused nearly US\$2.1 million in damages, including minor cosmetic damage to *Carnival Pride*.



Jill Abel - CEO

## An Azamazing Evening

**WHEN** luxury vessel, *Azamara Journey*, arrived into Cairns on Valentine's Day, her guests were treated to an evening that would make them fall in love with Australia courtesy of a Tjapukai cultural experience. Working closely with Abercrombie & Kent, this was the second year that an "Azamazing" experience featuring Tjapukai had been held. The immersive experience (a trademark for *Azamara*) began as indigenous guides boarded each coach as it headed for the Cairns Convention Centre and introduced the Tjapukai story and the schedule. Once seated at the venue, the guides stayed with their group of 30-40 guests who were then treated to a performance which included didgeridoo, discussions on bush foods and medicines, hunting and weapons techniques, marriage rites and language.

A series of dance performances were then held for the 600 guests, giving pax a glimpse into pre-white settlement customs and culture. Tjapukai is increasingly engaging with the cruise industry as the performers are also being asked to come on board ships docking in Cairns to provide a cultural experience to passengers. *Azamara* guests went on to another Azamazing experience when they were hosted at MONA in Tasmania where they were offered private access to the Museum's fascinating art collection hosted personally by owner, David Walsh and his team. These are wonderful examples of how Australian destinations are developing their experiences to ensure cruise passengers enjoy their time on shore as much as their time on board.



**SOON** there may be a new way to sail the Seine.

Italian firm Carlo Ratti Associati has created a concept that combines exercise and sailing by using human energy to power a floating gym up The Seine in Paris.

The boat, known as "The Paris Navigating Gym" (**pictured**) is 20m long and holds 45 passengers.

It works by converting the pedal power into electricity but if there aren't enough pax on board to run the boat, it will use renewable energy, the photovoltaic cells on its roof.

After eating la baguette, le fromage & drinking le vin, this sounds like a fun idea to burn those excessive kilograms.



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