



Agents to earn commission on tours

A new company is paying 10% commission for all shore excursions booked by cruise passengers.

LAUNCHED THIS WEEK BY A FORMER DIRECTOR OF Carnival Australia, Short Excursions is set to shake up the way cruise passengers book and pay for land tours.

The company is offering travel agents 10% commission to encourage clients to purchase its shore excursions instead of the options sold directly by cruise lines.

Managing director Michael Ager, who last year left his role as Princess Cruises' commercial director, told **CW** it was time to

end the "monopoly", especially in the South Pacific.

"From my time at Carnival, I saw that no port ever sells out its capacity, which means that either cruise passengers are seeking to do their own excursions or the options put forward by cruise lines aren't suitable," he said.

Ager said his service was "not a direct attack on cruise lines, but offers an alternative" to ship-organised tours.

"There has been quite a monopoly for a number of years and I believe any sort of competition is a win-win for agents and for cruise passengers," he said.

Ager identified Vanuatu and New Caledonia as destinations that most needed "independent" cruise tours.

"A lot of tour operators don't get the chance to show their wares because the cruise lines have such control, so I've had a great response, especially from indigenous operators," he said.

"I'm sure agents will also respond well to the opportunity to increase their revenue stream and provide a more complete service for their clients."

Short Excursions has 150 tours in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, priced from \$30 to \$720, with a 48-hour prior cancellation policy.

Tours can be booked at the same time as a client's cruise, and agents earn commission for every passenger booked.

"Our aim is to show cruise passengers a port's true highlights whilst working harmoniously with local tour operators and providing the best value hassle-free tours possible," Ager said.

See www.shortexcursions.com.au, and to discuss this story click [f](#).

P&O ditches Poum

P&O CRUISES HAS REPLACED SCHEDULED CALLS TO Poum (Emerald Bay) with visits into other Pacific Island destinations until the end of the year.

The cruise line has made its decision based on the current civil unrest on the island due to a tribal dispute.

At present, the cruise line is in the midst of alerting all affected passengers.

TODAY'S CRUISE WEEKLY

Welcome to today's **Cruise Weekly** Trade edition which features four pages packed with all the latest cruise industry news and photos.

Riviera floats in Genoa



LAST WEEK OCEANIA CRUISES CELEBRATED A MAJOR milestone in the birth of its new baby, the *Riviera*, as she floated out for the first time from her construction dock to her fitting-out berth at the Fincantieri Shipyard in Genoa.

Riviera's float out began last Wed with a traditional blessing from the shipyard's clergyman, which was followed by the opening of sluices to allow thousands of gallons of water to flood into the building dock.

It took three days to fill the dock and get *Riviera* floating, after which tugs towed her into the harbour before turning her 270 degrees and pulling her across the water to her new berth.

From her new home, *Riviera* will now undergo a nine-month fit out, which will see thousands of craftsmen, designers and workers complete her interiors.

When finished the mid-sized 66,084-ton *Riviera* will feature guest capacity for 1,250 pax, with a staff size of 800.

If all goes to plan, *Riviera* will launch in Apr next year, with her inaugural 10-day Mediterranean Tapestry voyage from Barcelona to Athens on 14 Apr.

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Cruise Weekly Australia/New Zealand

PO Box 428, West Ryde NSW 1685
Ph: 1300 799 220 | Fax: 1300 799 221

www.cruiseweekly.com.au

Editorial

Editors: Louise Goldsbury & Amanda Collins
info@cruiseweekly.com.au

Advertising & Promotions

Advertising & Marketing Manager:
Lisa Maroun
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

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Shore Excursions

Ever wondered how cruise lines are able to showcase literally thousands of shore excursions all over the world at the same time.

What appears to be very easy on the surface is in fact a complex supply chain with several layers of involvement to ensure maximum enjoyment for the cruise passenger.

In each cruise region the cruise lines appoint an Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) to put together a series of shore excursions that can appeal to a wide audience.

Walking tours, wilderness and wildlife, sport and recreation, entertainment and culture, wine and food and soft adventure tours are all examples of the sort of shore excursions cruise lines look to offer passengers in each port.

It is the role of the ITO to then effectively act as the cruise lines travel agent in working with local suppliers.

They are the destination experts in putting together shore excursions options that are designed to appeal and deliver good value.

For a supplier to be included in a shore excursion program, consideration is given to accessibility, distance from port, capacity to cater for groups, uniqueness, duration of the stop and above all the ability to be flexible on timing and numbers.

The cruise lines on board shore excursion manager who appears to know everything about everything (and often does) is actually liaising with the appointed ITO behind the scenes to ensure all ground operations run smoothly.

Passenger feedback from shore excursions is closely monitored by cruise lines to ensure future visits to particular ports continue to achieve a high level of guest satisfaction.



Brett Jardine
Brett Jardine
General Manager
ICCA

Online bank payments on the way

CCS is set to introduce a simplified payment system within POLAR Online.

EFFECTIVE FROM SEP, COMPLETE CRUISE Solution's new option is designed to enable agents to make instant online payments for bookings on P&O, Princess, Cunard, Carnival Cruise Lines and P&O Cruises World Cruising.

The system, to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, will not incur any transaction fees.

Don Clark, CCS' director of sales, said the

change would give agents complete control of the booking process "from the first quote to bon voyage" by eliminating the need to make payments through third parties.

"Not only will this system be easy to use, it will put an end to the days of agents having to call us to confirm or chase their payments," Clark said.

"Now, as soon as a payment is made through POLAR Online, it will be applied to the customer's booking."

Agents will be able to make multiple payments simultaneously and can access a complete booking list, which would show the amount due and payment dates for all bookings.

At the end of each day, agents will receive an email confirmation of all payments made.

Agents can enter their bank details and complete registration for the service within POLAR Online after the system is launched in Sep, Clark said.

To chat about this story click [f](#).

Norwegian Haven

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE HAS UNVEILED ITS PLANS for an exclusive suite complex which offers guests a "ship within a ship" experience, titled The Haven by Norwegian.

The Haven will be a feature onboard NCL's two new Project Breakaway ships (scheduled for release in 2013 and 2014), and will also be installed onboard five of its current ships *Norwegian Epic*, *Gem*, *Pearl*, *Jade* and *Jewel*.

Inside the Haven guests can expect a luxurious selection of suites and villas; their own concierge and 24-hour butlers; in-suite white tablecloth dining service; exclusive invitations to private events; priority reservations in the ship's specialty restaurants, spa and shows; and access to an exclusive Haven courtyard with private pool, hot tub, fitness and dining areas as well as the services of a Courtyard Valet.

Haven guests also have platinum keycard access to exclusive areas at the top of the ship and priority embarkation and debarkation.

Cunard's local fares

CUNARD CRUISE LINE IS OFFERING NEW LOCAL FARES for Australians wishing to join *Queen Elizabeth* or *Queen Mary 2* for regional cruise sectors during their respective 2012 World Voyage visits to local waters.

Local fares start from \$749 per person for a three-night taste of luxury on *QM2* from Fremantle to Adelaide departing 08 Feb 2012.

Other Aussie local rates include \$1,799 per person for a nine-night *QE* Auckland to Melbourne voyage via Napier and Wellington departing 20 Feb; and \$1,349 per person for a six-night *QM2* voyage from Fremantle to Sydney.



Cunard is also offering free oceanview to deluxe balcony stateroom upgrades on selected *Queen Mary 2* Fremantle sectors.

See www.cunardline.com.au.

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Adventurous? Watch this space

SMALL SHIP ADVENTURE COMPANY IS LOOKING TO play a bigger part in the industry by forging stronger pathways of communications between itself and Australian agents.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly** yesterday Small Ship's Marketing Director, Suzannah Cowley, said the company wanted to help agents understand the diverse range of opportunities that are on offer, and give them the tools to be able to sell those options simply and easily.

"Generally our passengers are customers who would prefer a professional to book their voyage for them, but some feel they have to do it themselves because some agents aren't aware of our offering and don't know how to sell the voyages effectively," she said.

"Travel agents who focus on a niche market have been seen to survive in the current marketplace better than those trying to offer everything to everyone.

"We want to agents to challenge themselves to develop this market, and we want to provide them with the tools to do so," she added.



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In terms of strengthening agent partnerships Small Ship has been running webinar and small group training workshops with agents on specific products.

"We are all about building long term relationships with our agent base and the fact that we choose not to deal with the direct public is appreciated by agents fostering an important trust that we will not be working against them in their local market," said Maryann Anderson Director Small Ship Adventure Company.

"Many agents are bombarded with product information, and there is a need to firstly identify your agent base, such as those with a Small Ship Cruise market or passion to sell this product, and then meet face to face to understand exactly what we can provide to the agents to make the job of marketing to their clients easier," she added.

MEANWHILE the company has also recently undergone a period of rapid growth, expanding its offerings beyond Alaska, picking up exclusive deals with several new GSAs including Island Spirit Cruises and Alaska Dream Cruises.

"What we've been able to secure is just so exciting, we really believe in these products" said Cowley.

"We are really in the infancy of this market, but we are already seeing strong interest from agents," she added.

Part of its communication focus therefore, will be aimed at re-educating agents about all the options available for small ship adventure luxury cruising.

To give agents an idea of the sheer diversity of Small Ship offerings, destinations now covered by the wholesaler include Alaska, Madagascar, the Red Sea, Egypt, Antarctica, Africa, India, The Maldives, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, South America, the Seychelles and the Galapagos.

Recently the company also partnered with legendary Canadian Rockies and Whistler train operator Rocky Mountaineer to offer Aussies a selection of cruise/train packages.

See www.smallshipadventure.com.

To discuss this story click [f](#).

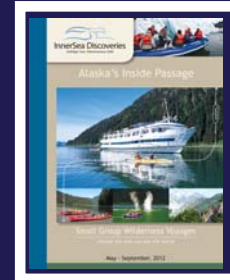
Silhouette Hamburg arrival

CELEBRITY CRUISES' 122,400-TON *CELEBRITY Silhouette* sailed into Hamburg at 8pm ahead of her official launch ceremony on 23 July.

Silhouette's launch will be followed by a seven-night inaugural sailing from Hamburg to Rome via Barcelona with five days at sea.

To view a video of *Silhouette* arriving in Hamburg [CLICK HERE](#).

Brochure of the week



Innerseas Discoveries 2012 brochure has arrived on Aussie shores.

Innerseas voyages combine luxury with adventure voyages and sail

through Alaska's Inside Passage.

The 2012 brochure features three Inside Passage itineraries including a seven-night Juneau to Ketchikan Eastern Coves voyage, a seven-night Ketchikan to Juneau Western Coves adventure (the two can be combined for a 14 night roundtrip from Juneau) and a 14-night cruise between Seattle to Juneau (or reverse).

For brochures call 1300 650 481 or see www.smallshipadventure.com

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Agents green for P&O

COMPLETE CRUISE SOLUTIONS' SALES TEAMS HAVE been painting the nation green in a whirlwind P&O Cruises tour de force involving more than 1000 agencies across the country.



Wearing green P&O branded jumpers the teams visited a whopping 1300 agencies to drum up excitement over the release of P&O's 2012 Earlybird Campaign.

The festive teams wooed agents with a ream of goodies including to-do notebooks.

Pictured above at Flight Centre Greensborough is FC's Lucien Graetz, CCS' Shane Gibbons and FC's Owen Scully.

Pictured below is Complete Cruise Solution's Angus Mackay with P&O Cruises' Hunter ambassador Paul 'The Chief' Harragon showing off the CCS Prius.



Destination refit

THE 15-YEAR OLD CARNIVAL DESTINY WILL UNDERGO a lengthy refit in early 2013, that will see her fitted with a host of new restaurants, as well as an upgrade to her WaterWorks and Camp Carnival, and a facelift to her cabins and spa.

NCL to go public

THE NEWLY FORMED PARENT COMPANY OF Norwegian Cruise Line, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, has filed with the US Securities Exchange Commission to offer US\$250 million NCL shares for sale to the public.

The initial public offering will be traded on the NASDAQ under the parent company acronym NCLH.

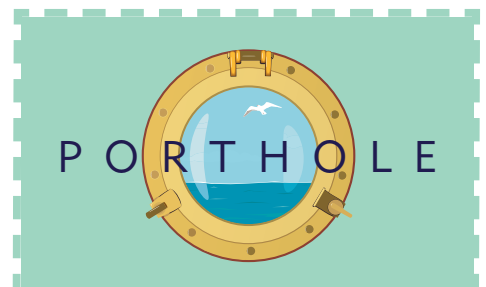
In its application NCL said it was selling its shares to reduce some of its debts.

A bit of American credit

PASSENGERS WHO BOOK ONE OF 13 SELECTED departures of American Safari Cruises Aquarium of the World Adventure between now and 30 Sep will receive \$200pp travel credit.

Travelling onboard the 22-guest *Safari Quest* the weeklong adventure departs roundtrip from La Paz, Baja California between Nov 2011 and Apr 2012.

See www.smallshipadventure.com.



PET TRAVEL PEEVES...

USA Today has published a list of the most annoying flying habits, which when considering your next international cruise package, may change the way you fly.

According to USA Today's frequent flyers, the number one peeve on a plane is: loud mobile phone conversations.

The peeve list also includes pax who hold up lines taking liquid through security; pax whose headphone music is so loud that it can be heard by others; rudeness to flight attendants and gate personnel; parents on planes who let their children run wild; people who do not turn off their electronics when required; the carriage of messy/smelly food; pax who carry onboard too many bags and then fill other's bins with them, reclining in a tight cabin, and leaving a window shade open when others are trying to sleep.

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