Disney profits fall but cruises full

Despite poor Q2 results, the new *Disney Dream* is almost booked out until October.

*Walt Disney Co reported a rare drop in profit* during the first three months of the year, but is buoyed by the performance of its latest ship.

Revenue and profit at Disney’s television networks ESPN and ABC grew, but film studio profits dropped US$70 million after its latest movie, ‘Mars Needs Moms’ bombed at the box office.

Net income for the three months ending 02 Apr fell to US$942 million, or 49 cents per share, from $953 million, or 48 cents per share, a year earlier.

Disney executives also blamed the impact of Japan’s earthquake, which closed down its theme park in Tokyo, the late Easter, and the US$20 million cost of launching *Disney Dream*, the line’s first new vessel in more than a decade.

But cruise bookings are “very strong”, CEO Bob Iger told Wall Street analysts.

Disney Cruise Line’s three ships are more than 95% booked for the current quarter (Apr – Jun), 86% booked for the next quarter (Jul – Sep) and almost 60% booked for the first quarter of 2012.

Iger said these figures were “pretty interesting, given the fact that the new ship has 4,000 guests on it.”

“We added a significant amount of inventory and bookings are very strong,” he said.

Disney also reported lower operating income at the cruise line for the second quarter as compared to the same quarter a year ago.

The company cited higher fuel costs as well as an increase in both its operating and promotional costs driven by the launch of the *Disney Dream*.

Seabourn software

*Seabourn has signed up software provider Fidelio Cruise to supply its Shipboard Property Management System fleet wide.*

The system will look after crew, passenger, visitor and financial operations, as well as shore excursions, spa operations, hotel maintenance, safety, security and passenger feedback.

ISP scores Wertanzl

*Passenger ship management company, International Shipping Partners (ISP), headquartered in Miami, has appointed industry veteran Dietmar Wertanzl as its new executive vice president of hotel and commercial operations.*

ISP is responsible for ship management services for vessels including *Akademik Ioffe, Clipper Odyssey, Clipper Adventurer, Corinthian II, Ocean Pearl, Sea Discoverer, Sea Spirit, Sea Voyager and more.*

Oceania’s culinary appt

*Kathryn Kelly has been appointed as the culinary enrichment director for Oceania Cruises’ Bon Appétit Culinary Center, to develop curriculum, integrate classes with shore activities, and recruit chefs/presenters.*
Europe to become largest market

North America may lose its position as the largest source market for the cruise sector by 2020.

The European cruise market is expected to overtake the US in less than nine years, according the United Kingdom’s Passenger Shipping Association (PSA).

Presented at last week’s Cruise Convention in Southampton, England, PSA’s ‘Cruise Review 2011’ suggests that if Europe’s double-digit growth continues over the next ten years, as it has for the past four, it could become the world’s largest source market by 2020.

“There is now a genuine prospect of North America losing its position as the largest source market for the cruise sector.”

A total of 5.45 million Europeans took a cruise in 2010 – an 11% rise on 2009 and more than double the 2.67 million passengers in 2003. The UK accounted for 1.62 million (6% growth), Germany 1.22 million (19% growth), Italy 889,000, Spain 645,000, and France 387,000.

However, Germany is tipped to knock the UK off the top spot in Europe by the end of this decade, due to its bigger economy, population and proportion of outgoing tourists.

Italy, France and Spain, all of which saw between 10 and 12 percent growth last year, will also forge ahead, PSA predicts, but this is largely because they had “logged behind” the UK for the past two decades.

There is now a “genuine prospect of North America losing its position as the largest source market for the cruise sector,” PSA concluded.

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Silversea owns and operates a fleet of six ‘boutique’ cruise ships and is recognized as the market leader in the ultra-luxury sector. A position is available for an experienced Inside Sales Coordinator based in their Sydney CBD office.

Reporting to the Regional Director AUS/UK, this role includes providing admin support for the Silversea Field sales team and major travel agent partners, producing monthly sales reports, assisting with ship visit manifests and coordinating all promotional events and trade shows.

Confidential applications to Philippa Baker on 02 9261 1926 or email Philippa@alexander-associates.com.au
Aussies spike Silversea growth

AUSTRALIANS ARE FLOCKING TO SILVERSEA in droves, with bookings for European and Alaskan voyages showing a significant spike, whilst there is also “an exceptional surge in interest” for its 2012 season.

On a global scale Australia remains the company’s third largest source market, making up 16% of the Silversea’s overall business.

Speaking to CW last week, Silversea’s regional director, Australia and NZ, Karen Christensen, attributed the spike to having pricing in both Australian and US dollars, as well as the company’s decision to instate a global equity in pricing.

“Without a doubt, people at this level of the market that want to play the money market, they want to hedge their bets and play with the US dollar,” Christensen said.

“They have clients who want to pay in Australian dollars.”

In terms of the company’s global equity in pricing, Christensen said it had levelled out the playing field and made the market fair.

“We’re not competing against our own office as well,” she said.

The booking surge itself has come from both new customers, drawn by the lure of Silver Spirit, as well as the company’s “extremely loyal” past passenger base.

Other long-term contributing factors to Silversea’s success in the face of the volatile market of the past few years, according to Christensen, have included the company’s decision to value-add instead of discount.

“We don’t want to play the price war and the luxury market doesn’t need to do that.

“The luxury highend traveller does not mind paying the price, but you must always deliver a high quality product,” she said.

As such, Silversea’s value-add Passport to Luxury program, introduced in the face of the GFC, has helped the cruise line maintain its customer base, whilst drawing new luxury travellers to the brand.

“When we introduced Passport to Luxury we could have easily discounted the price, but that’s not what this product deserves and the end-buyer is not interested in a discounted price but rather what they’re going to get for their money,” she said.

MEANWHILE agents wanting to become Silversea experts will be excited to learn that the wait is almost over for a Silversea training program, with Christensen confirming the company is planning to roll it out its Silversea Academy throughout Australia and NZ “hopefully in the not too distant future” (probably this year).

Crystal culinary delights

CRYSTAL CRUISES GUESTS WHO LOVE THEIR FOOD will be happy to learn that the cruise line has expanded its range of culinary excursions to offer more than 30 throughout southern Europe during the Northern fall season 2011.

Hollywood and Seabourn

HOLLYWOOD ROYAL, BLYTHE DANNER (aka Gwenyth Paltrow’s mum) has been named as the godmother to Seabourn’s newest vessel, Seabourn Quest.

An actor in her own right, Danner has received numerous Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe nominations throughout her career, and her most recent role saw her star with Robert De Niro in ‘Little Fockers’.

Danner will preside over Quest’s naming ceremony at the port of Barcelona on 20 Jun this year.

Following her official naming, Quest will depart on a 14-day maiden voyage to Athens, before commencing a season of seven-day Eastern Mediterranean cruises, operating alternately between Athens and Istanbul, and Venice and Athens, as well as a seven-day Black Sea voyage.

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Barcelona, Provence (Marseille), Monte Carlo, Portofino, Florence/Fies/Pisa/Tuscany/Livorno, Sarrento/Capri, Rome (Civitavecchia)

ITALIAN TREASURES
November 5, 2011 | 7 day voyage
onboard Insignia
Rome (Civitavecchia), Amalfi/Positano, Taormina (Sicily), Corfu, Barl, Dubrovnik, Venice

HISPANIC EXPLORATIONS
November 12, 2011 | 10 day voyage
onboard Insignia
Venice, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Taormina (Sicily), Amalfi/Positano, Florence/Pisa/Tuscany/Livorno, Monte Carlo, Rome (Civitavecchia)

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Scenic Europe earlybirds

**Passengers who book selected European river departures of 15 days or more from Scenic’s 2012 line up will be eligible for free flights, whilst guests who book voyages between 7-14 days will be eligible for a free return flight to Europe, including taxes.** The earlybirds are applicable for bookings made before 30 Sep.

Amongst Scenic’s 15-day 2012 Rhine, Main, Moselle and Danube river cruise schedule is a 15 day Jewels of Europe River itinerary from Amsterdam to Budapest (from AU$6,095pp/ps) as well as a 15-day Romantic Rhine & Moselle River Cruise from Amsterdam to Basel (from $6,395pp/ps). For full details see www.scenictours.com.au.

Hurtigruten’s loyal success

**Hurtigruten’s 1893 Ambassador loyalty program has been a raging success, having signed up 16,000 people since its launch last year.**

The figure has far exceeded the cruise line’s expectations at the current half-year mark, prompting Hurtigruten to launch the loyalty program beyond its current reach of Europe and the US.

The 1893 Ambassador program entitles guests who have cruised at least three consecutive nights with Hurtigruten to join for free, entitling them to bonuses including a 10% repeater discount when booking a voyage along the Norwegian Coast and a five percent repeater discount when booking a Hurtigruten expedition voyage.

Members also receive special travel arrangements, a Member Journal every three months, as well as added extras like fruit baskets and bridge visits once onboard.

To learn more about the program visit the website of Hurtigruten’s Australian gsa Discover the World at - www.discovertheworld.com.au.

Hunter agents get a visit from Newcastle’s Chief

**Aussie rugby league football legend Paul Harragon, dropped into more than 35 travel agents scattered throughout the NSW Hunter region this month, to help spread the word about P&O Cruises’ 2012 Newcastle season.**

The former Newcastle Knights Premierships Captain, known also as simply ‘The Chief’, is P&O Cruises’ local Hunter region (which includes Newcastle) ambassador, and a self-declared cruise fan.

The Chief is pictured above with the team from Flight Centre Maitland (from left) Kylie Berry, Nicole Doumis, Paul Harragon (centre), Kristen Campbell and CCS BPM NSW Angus Mackay. Pictured right (from left) is the team from Harvey World Travel Glendale: Melissa Sanday, Ros Johns, Paul Harragon, Maree Anthony, Kristen Urch and CCS BPM NSW Angus Mackay.