

Royal Caribbean boosts Asia focus

With bookings now open for its 2012 Asia program, RCI declares greater demand from Chinese consumers.

ROYAL Caribbean has announced details of next year's deployment schedule for *Voyager of the Seas* with "unrivalled capacity, itineraries and onboard amenities".

It also revealed a fourth homeport will be established in China – at Xiamen.

"We have a leading market position in China," said Dr Zinan Liu, md China and Asia, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.

"Customer demand is strengthening and we're responding by increasing our commitment to the region with an additional,

bigger ship, to offer a wider range of itineraries to even more ports," he added.

Voyager's inaugural Asia season starts on 26 May 2012 in Singapore, followed by sailings from Shanghai (Baoshan) and Tianjin in China.

A 14-night repositioning cruise departing 22 October 2012 from Singapore arrives in Fremantle on 05 Nov 2012 to start the Australian season.

"*Voyager of the Seas'* deployment to Asia is another milestone for Royal Caribbean International, and a mark of our confidence and commitment to the region's potential, as well as part of our global growth strategy," said RCCL's Michael Bayley, evp international.

The 137,276 GRT *Voyager* will offer short cruises (three to eight nights) in Asia and 14- to 18-night cruises in the South Pacific to New Zealand and Australia.

With *Voyager of the Seas* and *Legend of the Seas*, which has been deployed in Asia since 2010, the line is offering 49 sailings out of China next year.

Cruises include the seven-night 'Pearls of the Orient' and 'Jewels of Asia', visiting Japan and South Korea.

It will be the first ship in Australasia with features such as the Royal Promenade, ice rink and rock-climbing wall, and the 14-night repositioning cruise is priced from \$1,499pp.

Bookings for *Voyager of the Seas'* 2012 Asia season are now open.

For details of other itineraries, go to www.cruisingpower.com or call 1300 754 500.

Cruisemart website goes live

QUEENSLAND-based Cruisemart has launched a new website offering live real-time availability and booking capability for a range of cruise lines including P&O Cruises, Royal Caribbean, Cunard and Princess.

The site at www.cruisemart.com.au is claimed to offer more than 12,000 cruise only, fly/cruise and fly/cruise/stay packages, which the company says is the "largest on any website in Australia".

Cruisemart also offers a call centre, a money back guarantee on online bookings offering cancellations or changes at no charge up to the next business day, while real-time online bookings are secured immediately by payment of a small deposit.

Formerly trading as Hope Island Travel, Cruisemart is owned by Les Farrar and also has an office in Nundah, Brisbane.

Carnival NZ partnership

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines and the NZ govt have confirmed a public-private partnership to develop the cruise industry (**CW** Tue), with NZ PM John Key saying there's a "huge opportunity for Pacific communities...to benefit from the rising popularity of cruise holidays".

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TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Cruise Weekly's new-look trade issue today features five pages of cruise news and photos.

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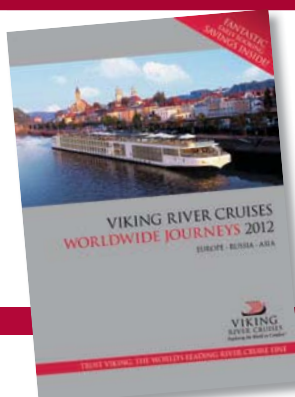
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ICCA UPDATE

INTERNATIONAL CRUISE COUNCIL AUSTRALASIA

ICCA General Manager, Brett Jardine

Russia River Cruising with ICCA Cruise Line Member Scenic Tours

With the growth in popularity of river cruising in Europe over recent years the opportunity to promote Russia with potential clients may have been overlooked or even forgotten.

Russia was inaccessible for many years following World War II but today it is possible to have an in-depth experience of this fascinating destination.

From great cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg that offer extraordinary arts and culture through to smaller ancient villages offering hidden treasures, taking a river cruise in Russia will potentially allow a far greater experience within one itinerary than many people would even have considered in a lifetime.

Scenic Tours are well known for delivering a luxurious and all-inclusive product in Europe where they own and operate their own fleet of Scenic 'Space-Ships', all built to exact standards to ensure delivery of an unforgettable cruise experience.

Scenic are now looking to Russia and its long term potential as they introduce the 'Scenic Tsar' for the 2012 season.

With a three million Euro investment in the refurbishment of Scenic Tsar, Scenic will be able to offer clients a first class luxury river cruise vessel from May 2012 to traverse Russia's waterways.

With inclusions to places that have long intrigued the Western world such as The Kremlin, Red Square, Peterhof Palace and the Hermitage Museum, not to mention the current strength of our dollar, there may never be a better opportunity to visit Russia.

For more information on Russia River Cruising with Scenic Tours go to scenictours.com.au



APT sets new standard on Mekong

The 62-suite *ms AmaLotus* has commenced her maiden voyage, bringing luxury cruising to Vietnam and Cambodia.

OWNED and operated by a partnership involving APT, AMA Waterways and Vietnam's Indochina Sails, the *AmaLotus* set sail last Monday 5th September 2011 from its homeport near Ho Chi Minh City.

Christened by local Buddhist monks, the ship is bound for Siem Reap with a number of APT's Australian clients onboard.

APT owner Geoff McGeary declared it "the most modern and beautiful ship ever to sail the Mekong river".

The French colonial designed *AmaLotus* boasts the largest suites on the Mekong, 90% of which have private outdoor and twin balconies, plus a sun deck with pool and bar, two lounges, spa, gym, library and restaurant.

Like its fleetmate *La Marguerite*, it has a central passageway so that fellow passengers do not walk between the cabins and the outside of the ship, blocking the river view.

Outside walkway access to cabins is the standard in most other Mekong cruise ships built today, APT said.

APT marketing manager Debra Fox claimed the *AmaLotus* created a new standard for river

cruising in the region.

"All the hallmarks of APT's Europe river ships in terms of innovative contemporary appointments, comfort, choice and service are replicated here on the Mekong," she said.

Passengers have a choice of Asian and Western cuisine, regional wine is included with lunch and dinner, and soft drinks and local beer and spirits are served all day.

Eight-day Mekong cruises feature in nine out of 10 fully inclusive tours in APT's Vietnam and Cambodia 2011-2012 brochure, with 58 cruise departures scheduled for the season.

For details, see www.aptouring.com.au.

Crystal free 'Voluntourism'

EIGHT innovative new shore excursions are being offered for passengers onboard Crystal Cruises, allowing them to assist people in need in Italy, Greece, Croatia, Israel, the Canary Islands and southern California.

The special additions see guests able to volunteer to assist a range of philanthropic organisations, with activities such as working in homes for the disabled, packaging and distributing food, collecting produce to help feed the hungry, gardening with the elderly, and helping injured turtles.

Participation in the special activities is free, with Crystal handling all logistics.

Abercrombie & Kent

CRUISE MANAGER

An exciting opportunity to lead the fast growing Cruise Division of international travel company, Abercrombie & Kent, based in their South Melbourne head office. This opportunity is for a Cruise Manager of the highest calibre who will be able to lead and manage a small team.

The successful candidate will display a mature attitude with leadership skills, be hands-on and able to work in a high pressure environment. Ability to prepare Cruise Proposals, build relationships with our cruise partners and display attention to detail are essential, together with an excellent grasp of the English language. Lateral and creative thinking are a must with a passion for creating exciting shore experiences. The position will involve travel within Australia and overseas.

Knowledge of the cruise industry is essential.

This opportunity is well suited to a self-motivated high achiever who enjoys working in a small team environment.

Email your CV to Linda Richardson at lrichardson@abercrombiekent.com.au or send to Level 3, 290 Coventry Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205, by no later than Friday 16th September 2011.

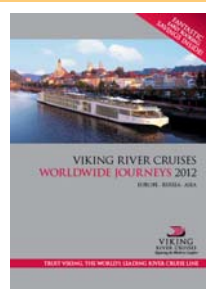


Brochure Spotlight

Viking River Cruises has released its new Worldwide Journeys 2012 brochure, featuring cruises in Europe, Russia, Asia and Egypt.

New for next year are six state-of-the-art Viking Longships, with itineraries along the great waterways of Central and Eastern Europe, France, Russia, Ukraine, Egypt, China and South East Asia.

Earlybird savings of up to \$4,000 per couple are on offer, with copies now available from Brochure Flow - vikingrivercruises.com.au



Disney Fantasy complete

THE final piece of Disney Cruise Line's new *Disney Fantasy* was laid last weekend, with the ship on schedule for its maiden voyage in Mar next year.

To see a timelapse video of the big moment click on the **Travel Daily TV** logo.



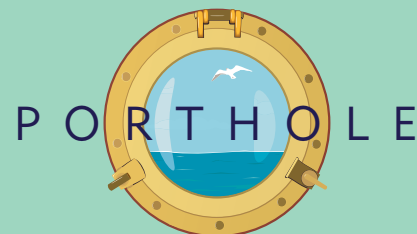
Alaska up just slightly this year

THE Alaska Cruise Association says cruise visitors to the biggest state in the union are up 7,000 for 2011, with an expected total of 887,000 cruise visitors this year - an increase of around 0.07%.

This year four new ships are cruising in Alaska - *Disney Wonder*, *Crystal Symphony*, *Oceania Regatta* and *Silver Shadow* - but the new capacity has been balanced by the absence of *Royal Princess* and Holland America's *Ryndam*.

However the Alaskan tourism industry as a whole is anticipating growth of between 4% and 5% over 2011, with an increase in jobs and hotel occupancy.

In 2012 Princess will bring another ship to Alaska, which will translate to about 50,000 more visitors to the state.



PASSENGERS on board this upcoming cruise are set to be truly rocking - regardless of what the surface of the ocean is like.

The "Monsters of Rock" voyage from Fort Lauderdale, Florida onboard the *MSC Poesia* understatedly claims to be the "greatest floating 80's heritage rock festival to ever sail the seven seas".

Featured artists include bands such as Cinderella, Tesla, Kix, Stryper, Y&T and the curiously named Lynch Mob.

There's also Bang Tango, Keel, XYZ, Black 'N Blue, Firehouse and Faster Pussycat, with prices for the four day voyage starting at US\$849 per person.

Travel agents with headbanging clients can check it out at monstersofrockcruise.com.

New P&O World Cruising TV

GUESTS onboard the five P&O Cruises World Cruising vessels are being offered two extra TV channels through a new contract with OceansTV, with the expansion adding comedy and drama which target British sensibilities.

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Cruise Shipping Asia regos

THE organisers of the upcoming Cruise Shipping Asia conference in Singapore from 16-18 Nov 2011 have opened registrations for the conference and exhibition - for more information see cruiseshippingasia.com.

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Steel cut on MS Europa 2

CONSTRUCTION has commenced on the latest addition to the Hapag-Lloyd Cruises Fleet, with the *MS Europa 2* set to debut in the second quarter of 2013.

"After an intense planning stage, we are very pleased to be taking this decisive step towards the extension of our fleet with the first steel cut," said Hapag-Lloyd managing director Sebastian Ahrens.

Individual parts of the ship will be created in different halls at the STX shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France, over the coming months, with the keel laying scheduled for Q4 in 2012.

The *Europa 2* will further enhance Hapag-Lloyd's luxury offering, with a "modern and informal interpretation" of its *Europa*, which is the only cruise ship to be awarded the 5-star plus ranking in the Berlitz Cruise Guide.

The vessel will have 11 decks and 258 suites, with a maximum capacity of 516 passengers.

Hapag-Lloyd is represented in Australia and New Zealand by Landmark Travel - for more info email cruise@landmarktravel.com.au.

New Prestige Holdings ceo

PRESTIGE Holdings, the company which owns both Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, has a new president.

38-year-old Kunal Kamani, who previously worked as the firm's chief financial officer before moving last year to a role with Bank of America, returns to take responsibility for both cruise lines' marketing, sales, public relations, e-commerce and procurement.

Regent Seven Seas chief Mark Conroy and Oceania president Bruce Himelstein will both report to Kamani, who said the company's strategy had "never been more compelling".

"I'm delighted to be a part of this exciting growth story," he added.

HAL wins swimming case

A **US COURT** has ruled that Holland America Line had no duty to warn a passenger about the possible danger of swimming at a beach near where his ship was docked in Mexico in November 2008.

Gerald E. Samuels sued the cruise company after being "swallowed and tossed" by ocean waves at Lover's Beach in Cabo San Lucas while on a seven day cruise.

He was knocked over and had to be rescued by bystanders, and has been classified as a "high-functioning quadriplegic with significant pain and mobility limitations".

Samuels claims he visited the beach based on the recommendations of unnamed cruise line staff, and says he should have been warned about the potential danger.

However judges ruled in favour of the cruise line, after HAL presented evidence that Samuels was the first passenger to be injured at the beach in 27 years of sailing to the port.



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Face to Face: Ben Angell

Marketing Manager, RCCL Cruises Ltd

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

What is the key to your success?

Working with world-leading brands in Royal Caribbean Cruise lines, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises, surrounded by a team and by travel partners who share my passion for the cruise industry.

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

Five including Royal Caribbean's *Navigator of the Seas* (sister ship to Australia's *Voyager of the Seas*) and the inaugural in July of *Celebrity Silhouette* (sister ship to Australia's *Celebrity Solstice*) was another highlight.

What is your favourite destination and why?

The Mediterranean is my favourite for the sheer variety of ports, culture, history and of course, amazing weather.

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

On *Allure of the Seas*, seeing the Dreamworks characters come to life in a parade in front of delighted passengers lining the main street of the ship was something else. That, and the first time I walked on living grass in the middle of the ocean while I was on *Celebrity Solstice*.

How do you spend days at sea?

An ideal day would include some form of physical activity like rock climbing, ice-skating or a round of mini-golf, relaxation at the pool or spa, socialising with friends over a great meal and watching a performance in the theatre or an ice skating show.

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

China and the surrounding region have huge potential.

How can cruising attract more young people and families?

By providing a wider choice of facilities, attractions and activities that will appeal to a very broad range of people.

What do you think is the most underrated aspect of cruising?

Its broad appeal; a typical Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises cruise attracts a variety of people – whether it's a holiday with friends, a romantic getaway, a family holiday, or even a holiday by yourself.

Describe your perfect cruise in 25 words.

I like to be "wowed" - innovative facilities and activities, superb service, interesting ports, delicious food – then add warm weather and good friends for perfection.

What is your best tip for sea-sickness?

I don't get sea-sickness but a friend of mine swears by ginger.



Ben's Cruise Favourites!

Ship: *Celebrity Silhouette*

Ship activity: Ice skating!

Shore Excursion: A sea-plane flight over the Great Barrier Reef

Region: Mediterranean

Port: Sydney. Sailing through the heads and past the Opera House is hard to beat.

Onboard Food/Drink: Anything from the 'global tapas' menu in Qsine restaurant onboard select *Celebrity Solstice* class ships.

Perk of the Job: All of it!

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