

Costa CEO replaced by AIDA president

Pier Luigi Foschi has announced his retirement, which will see a management shake-up at Costa Cruises.

MICHAEL Thamm, president of Germany-based AIDA Cruises, has been appointed ceo of the Costa Group, replacing Pier Luigi Foschi, who steps down from the post on 01 Jul.

The move is part of a long-term succession plan with the scheduled retirement of Foschi once he reached the age of 65 last September.

But Foschi will remain as chairman and a managing director of the Costa Group, and will sit on the Board of Directors of Carnival Corporation & plc.

He has also vowed to continue to oversee the company's government relations and matters related to the *Costa Concordia* accident.

"I will maintain my full support for the great Costa management team to overcome the recent difficulties in order to reconfirm Costa's leadership in Europe," Foschi said in a statement.

As the new ceo, Thamm will serve on Costa's Board of Directors and report to Foschi, as well as Carnival Corporation chairman and ceo Micky Arison and vice chairman and coo Howard Frank.

Replacing Thamm is AIDA senior executive Michael Ungerer, while Gianni Onorato is expected to continue in his role as president of the Costa Cruises brand.

Foschi joined Costa Crociere in 1997 and was elected chairman in 2000.

Under his leadership, the company launched an €11 billion fleet expansion program, creating Europe's largest fleet: 25 ships (14 Costa Cruises, eight AIDA Cruises and three Iberocruceros)

with total guest capacity of 61,500.

Six more new ships are set to enter service for the group by 2016 (two for Costa Cruises and four for AIDA Cruises).

Since 2000 Foschi has presided over an increase in the company's revenues from €572.4m to €3.1b in 2011 (+ 540 %), with profits growing consistently over the last 10 years.

As a result, Costa is now ranked as one of Italy's 10 most profitable companies.

Also in the period from 2000 to 2011, the number of total guests travelling with Costa Group rose from 363,000 to 2.3 million.

Micky Arison praised Foschi's achievements and congratulated Thamm, who will relocate to Genoa.

"Pier has made it known for some time that he intended to retire once he turned 65 and today's announcement is part of our longtime succession plan that allows us to tap into our talented management team to find qualified individuals to oversee our brands," Arison said.

"At the same time, Michael has done a superb job managing AIDA Cruises and we have every confidence that Michael will continue these efforts at the helm of Costa".

Fascinosa delivery next month

COSTA *Fascinosa's* delivery will take place on 05 May this year, at the Venice Passenger Terminal, and will be followed by a 10-day inaugural cruise from Venice to Greece, Israel and Turkey, departing 11 May.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of **CW** features 4 pages of news, plus a page from Voyages of Discovery **p5**.

Voyages' free return flights

VOYAGES of Discovery is offering free return flights for guests who book on a selection of its Latin America voyages, including the 95 night El Grande Grand Latin America Discovery departing 03 Jan 2013, see **page 5** for details.

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ICCA UPDATE

ICCA General Manager,
Brett Jardine

Spotlight on ICCA Cruise Statistics

Next Monday 30 April the ICCA will be releasing data on Australian cruise passenger trends from 2011 and this will be followed by the release of New Zealand passenger data on Tuesday 08 May.

For many of you statistics and graphs can be very boring but when your business includes (and depends on) a sector of the travel industry that is showing no signs of slowing down then I would encourage you to sit up and take notice of some of the data.

The data we release will look at the number of cruise passengers from this market, where they are cruising, when they are cruising and for how long. In addition to this, some new data that will be made available from 2011 will show a breakdown in where cruise passengers are originating from (by State) and what sort of booking lead times we are seeing as an average across all of the ICCA Member Cruise Lines.

How does all this impact our retail sector?

The answer is a simple one for everyone in your agency.

Naturally the business owner should be keen to know if their cruise sales are keeping pace with the industry benchmark but also individual consultants can also be measuring their own performance against these industry trends.

Lastly we will also take a look at how our market stacks up against other key source markets for cruise around the world.

You may think this is not relevant to you but rest assured – IT IS!!

Most cruise line executives are very quick to look at the market (or population) penetration in different countries.

This is the number of cruise passengers divided by the population.

In 2010 the market penetration for Australia was 2.1% and for New Zealand 1%.

This is a very reassuring indicator that will have a bearing on marketing dollars that are spent here as well as plans for future deployment of vessels knowing that the particular market continues to grow.



RCCL's Q1 profits plummet by 40%

Royal Caribbean Cruises is satisfied with its first-quarter results in the current "highly volatile" market.

THE impact of the Costa Concordia disaster in Jan has surfaced in the latest financial report by RCCL, which saw profits drop to US\$47 million, or 21 cents per share, compared to US\$78.4 million, or 36 cents per share, in the same period last year.

But the company remains hopeful of an improvement in the next quarter, describing the Q1 results as better than expected.

"First-quarter results were satisfactory given the difficult and uncertain operating environment, and we continue to see gradual improvement in the demand for our great vacations," said Richard Fain, RCCL ceo.

"We did not expect the impact of the tragedy to be long term, and we are seeing evidence the effects are waning," he added.

On the positive side, revenues improved to US\$1.8 billion compared to US\$1.7 billion in the first quarter last year, and net yields

increased 7%.

Net cruise costs (excluding fuel) increased 5.7%.

Although bookings since Feb have been down by "mid-single digits", the company has seen booking activity gradually improve over the past few months.

"Despite the extraordinary disruptions to our booking patterns this year, thus far the recovery is consistent with our forecasts," said Brian Rice, executive vice president and chief financial officer.

"The Caribbean and Alaska remain healthy and, as expected, a wide range of outcomes still persist regarding Europe this summer."

Rice said the marketplace is "still volatile and uncertain, so we are narrowing our yield and EPS ranges to reflect our best estimates at this time."

The company estimates its second quarter earnings per share will be between a loss of 5 cents to a gain of 5 cents.

Win a Coral Princess cruise

EVERY booking made with Coral Princess Cruises between 18 Apr and 30 Sep 2012, will score agents an entry into the draw to win their choice of any Coral Princess cruise valued up to \$24,980.

To enter the draw, email the booking details (your name, booking number, pax name) of each booking you make to elise@coralprincess.com.au (NSW, NT, SA and ACT) or jackie@coralprincess.com.au (Qld, Vic, Tas and WA) before 30 Sep 2012.



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iCruise boosts cruise search power

iCruise.com's new Cruise Finder Plus now enables consumers to search for cruises using 'natural language' phrases.

EVATURE, a leading provider of free-text search technology for the travel industry, has announced an expansion into cruise search capabilities, which allows consumers to search for cruises using 'free text', or 'natural language' phrases.

Based on this technology, iCruise.com, a cruise travel retailer in the US, has today launched Cruise Finder Plus, an industry-first free-text cruise search tool.

Cruise Finder Plus allows users to search in complete, natural-language phrases with as much detail as they like.

For example, a search for: "Mediterranean

cruises from Istanbul in July on a tall ship" or "Disney cruises to Alaska on August 18" will return real-time search results similar to traditional search methods.

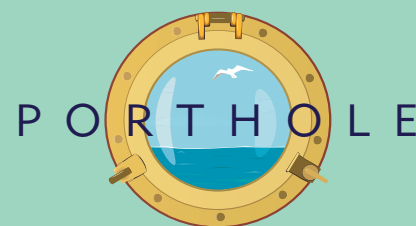
Barry Volinsky, co-founder of Evature, said EVA's expanded cruise capabilities would offer consumers "the best travel search experience."

The new cruise search capabilities are in addition to Evature's current support of flight and hotel free-text searches offered through the EVA service.

Evature also offers an Android application enabling hotel search via voice.

This application will become available to open source on 30 Apr, making it easier for developers to add voice search capabilities to their mobile travel apps.

Although iCruise doesn't have an Australian operation, interestingly the icruise.com.au domain name currently directs to NRMA Travel's Cruise Spirit website - while the Travel Compensation Fund also confirmed the registration of a Queensland agency called iCruise and Travel.



DULL and Boring sightseeing.

If you have cruisers sailing the Trans-Atlantic who enjoy quirky adventures, you may want to suggest that they do a Dull and Boring cycle tour.

Discovered by a Scottish tourist on a cycling adventure in the US, Elizabeth Leighton, from the village of Dull, "found" her hometown's sister Boring.

After discovering Boring, she wrote to local officials in Dull, who then set about contacting their Boring counterparts, with a Declaration of Sistership as the end result.

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Celebrity scores the Olympics

CELEBRITY Cruises has secured the rights to broadcast live via satellite the London Olympics opening and closing ceremonies, as well as swimming, diving, gymnastics, rowing, cycling, athletics, and basketball events and a daily compilation of highlights.

Carnival Australia doubles NZ

NEW Zealand has enjoyed more than double the amount of visits from ships under the Carnival Australia banner this summer season compared to the same time last year.

The season saw almost 400 Carnival ship visits across 12 NZ ports this year, almost five times the amount of calls than there was 3 years ago.

According to Carnival's figures, the cruise line brought more than 115,000 pax to NZ from Oct 2011 through to Apr 2012, contributing an estimated NZ\$200m to the nation's economy.

"New Zealand and Australia are the fastest growing and most exciting cruise markets in the world," said Carnival's CEO Ann Sherry.

"More Kiwis than ever before are discovering cruise holidays.

"The Pacific Islands are proving a very popular playground, and being able to explore several different island countries and have your food, accommodation and entertainment included is obviously an appealing option," she added.

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River Beatrice enchants agents along the Danube



23 of Australia's top agents (pictured left) were waltzed along the Danube onboard Uniworld's *River Beatrice*, escorted by Uniworld sales managers Anastasia Agius and Rebeka Belcher.

Onboard *Beatrice* this week, the agents have an exciting line-up of excursions to look forward to, including indepth tours of Vienna and Salzburg.

Princess' Europe cruise deals

PRINCESS Cruises has launched a range of Discovery Deals on a range of European voyages booked by 30 Jun 2012, including a 12-night Crown Princess Greek Island escape, departing 20 Nov 2012, from \$1,240pp/ts.

Salvage of Concordia

AN American owned specialist marine salvage and wreck removal company, Titan Salvage, will work in partnership with well-known Italian marine contractor, Micoperi, to remove the capsized *Costa Concordia* from off the coast of Giglio's Island.

Expected to commence in early May (subject to approval from Italian authorities) and to take around 12 months to complete, the plan will see the wreck floated and then towed to an Italian port where it will be "dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Italian authorities".

Costa also said that once work is complete, the sea bottom will be cleaned and marine flora replanted.

Free flights to Vanuatu

ISLAND Escape Small Ship Cruising will refund return flight fares to Vanuatu (ex Syd, Mel, Bne) up to a total value of \$750pp, for all passengers who book a Vanuatu Islands of Discovery cruise before 31 May 2012.

The offer is valid for all seven sailings of *Island Passage's* Vanuatu Islands of Discovery between Jul and Aug 2012.

See- www.islandescape.co.nz.

APT's Freedom of Choice

APT'S new Freedom of Choice local tour options will debut in the company's soon-to-be-released Europe cruising brochure.

The three new options include a photography or Flamenco Class in Barcelona, Catacomb tour or Italian Cooking Class in Rome, and a guided tour of Les Baux de Provence or Saint Paul de Mausole Asylum (made famous as the place where Van Gogh spent his last days) in Arles.

The options bring the tally of Freedom of Choice tours offered by the company to 200.

Star Princess in trouble

PRINCESS Cruises' *Star Princess* is copping a lashing after reports surfaced that it did not assist the crew of a ship which had been adrift without power, water or food for 16 days.

Star Princess was sailing between Ecuador and Costa Rica on 20 Mar when guests spotted a fishing boat whose crew were waving for help.

Members of the group alerted a crew member of the problem, however it seems the message was not relayed to *Star's* Captain Edward Perrin and *Star* simply sailed on past.

Two members of the stranded ship's crew died days after the encounter, with the third rescued by a larger fishing vessel 12 days later.

Responding to the incident Princess Cruises said that since it became aware of the situation it has launched an investigation.

"The preliminary results of our investigation have shown that there appeared to be a breakdown in communication in relaying the passenger's concern," the cruise line said, adding that neither *Star Princess's* Captain nor the officer of the watch were notified.

"Captain Perrin is devastated that he is being accused of knowingly turning his back on people in distress," the cruise line said.

"Had the Captain received this information, he would have had the opportunity to respond.

"We deeply regret this incident and are continuing our investigation to fully understand the circumstances," the cruise line added.

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