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Uniworld plans new ship, destination

The *SS Catherine* will debut in the south of France in 2014, while the fully refurbished *River Royale* moves to Bordeaux.

A **SISTER** ship to the award-winning *SS Antoinette*, Uniworld's *SS Catherine* is set to offer eight-day itineraries on the Rhône and Saône rivers in Burgundy and Provence.

Meanwhile, the *River Royale*, currently sailing these rivers, will launch a new destination for the cruise line in Bordeaux.

The itinerary will begin and end in the UNESCO World Heritage city and include visits to Aquitaine Châteaux and Pauillac, the gateway to the Medoc wine route, and St. Emilion, the oldest wine area of the region.

River Royale, which was refurbished for this year's season, and the *River Empress*, which operates the 'European Jewels' cruise between Amsterdam and Budapest, are also both scheduled to undergo major remodelling before starting the 2014 program.

Speaking to **CW** this morning, John Molinaro, general manager Australia, said the new 159-passenger *SS Catherine* would boast "Red Carnation Hotel touches", an outdoor dining terrace, a bistro, the jungle-themed Leopard Lounge and an indoor pool and spa, to help guests cool off on warm French summer days. "She is going to be built along the lines of *Antoinette* in terms of the amenities and opulence that only Uniworld can provide," he said.

All suites and staterooms on the top deck will feature full open-air private balconies, which convert to enclosed conservatories with the touch of a switch.

Staterooms on the middle deck will have French balconies, with all suites and

staterooms onboard fitted with handcrafted Savoir beds and marble bathrooms.

The luxury ship also will feature art, classic furnishings, old world antiques and marble. Guy Young, President of Uniworld, said: "I have no doubt in my mind that the *SS Catherine* will continue setting the standard in luxury river cruising in the South of France along the Rhône and Saône, and will allow us to offer more passenger capacity to support our Burgundy and Provence itinerary, which is one of our most popular programs".

"We therefore made the decision to move the *River Royale* to Bordeaux's Aquitaine region as the size of this ship is perfect for navigating Garonne, Gironde, and Dordogne rivers."

A preview brochure will be released early next year, supported by local promotions, Molinaro said.

"We are working on the 2014 program now and will be offering many things to entice agents and consumers.

"We are already having a very good 2013 and we are still looking at expansion and new rivers to explore."

ALL THE CRUISE NEWS

Today's trade issue of **CW** features three pages jam packed with all the latest cruise news, PLUS a front page wrap from Celebrity Cruises introducing *Celebrity Solstice*.

Calls for single EU visa

THE Chairman of the European Cruise Council, Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio, has told delegates at the Seatrade Med convention that the European Union should look to develop a single European tourist visa.

Addressing delegates d'Ovidio said "The opportunities to attract cruise tourists from other parts of the world to Europe - with its unique and rich cultural heritage - are enormous".

"We are concerned, however, that this huge potential is being hampered by unnecessarily bureaucratic procedures for the issuing of tourist visas into Europe.

"Unlocking this potential would be greatly assisted by international action to facilitate and simplify the process of issuing tourist visas to cruise passengers from around the world wishing to experience a European cruise," he added.

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*Select December 2013 departures for *Rhine Getaway* and *Romantic Danube*. [^]Viking \$1795 Air offer is strictly limited, conditions apply, subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. Prices are listed in Australian dollars, per person, ex. Australia. Guests booked on a Viking 2013 cruise / tour itinerary can receive return economy class airfare from Australia (from ADL/BNE/MEL/PERSYD) to Europe return for \$1795.00, with a carrier chosen by Viking. Non-refundable full airfare payment (\$1795 per person) is due at the time of booking. Valid for travel between 20 November 2013 and 10 January 2014 only. Guests may choose date for travel and major European gateway destination, for full list visit www.vikingrivercruises.com.au or request at the time of booking. Offer is non-changeable, not redeemable for cash, non-transferable and non-redeemable for cruise credits. Price is in Australian dollars, per person and includes seasonal surcharges, all government fees and taxes and air fuel surcharges. Full airline terms and conditions will apply. Additional conditions apply, visit www.vikingrivercruises.com.au.

CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Cruise News & Views



Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

Passenger Safety

Keen cruise industry observers will already be aware of the new passenger safety legislation that was proposed earlier this year by our sister association CLIA.

Under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) the muster of newly embarked passengers for a lifeboat drill prior to or immediately upon departure, (instead of 'within 24 hours', as stated in the current regulations) will be mandatory for a ship engaged on a voyage where passengers are scheduled to be on board for more than 24 hours.

The SOLAS convention is managed by the International Maritime Organisation and they have proposed that the new pre departure life boat drill enters into force from late 2014.

Why wait.....

You will be re-assured to know that ICCA Member Lines (most of whom are CLIA Members) have already put this practice into effect.

Many of you will have even experienced this new practice as part of the recent one-nighters on *Carnival Spirit* and *Voyager of the Seas* out of Sydney.

It is certainly comforting to be part of an industry that is on the front foot when it comes to passenger safety - our number one priority.

Ongoing innovation in safety has been a hallmark of the cruise industry for decades and it is important that you and your clients acknowledge the small investment in time that it takes to participate in such drills when embarking on a cruise holiday.

Watch Characters have brekkie

ROYAL Caribbean has uploaded a new video for cruisers and agents to watch, titled Rise and Shine with DreamWorks: Royal Caribbean's Character Breakfast Delights Guests.

To watch **CLICK HERE**.



New promotion for agent training

P&O and Princess Cruises are offering prizes to encourage travel agents to complete Academy training programs.

EVERY agent who attains one of the four program rankings will be entered into a draw to win prizes, including the newly released Nescafe Dolce Gusto Genio mini espresso machines, Tern Link C7 mini folding bikes and Apple iPad Minis.

Running until 01 March 2013, the competition is open to all agents with an existing ranking in P&O Cruises or Princess Cruises Academy, as well as newcomers.

The Academy training program is designed to boost travel agents' knowledge of P&O Cruises' and Princess Cruises' products and help them increase sales.

It also offers a range of benefits including education credits with ICCA, priority access to shipboard events, access to graduation cruises and special offers and promotions?

The online programs feature 24 modules and a final exam, and follow the naval tradition of recognising achievement with promotion through the ranks, from First Officer to Commodore.

Modules include customer service and sales;

Viking orders more ships

VIKING Ocean Cruises, sister company of Viking River Cruises, has signed an agreement with shipbuilder Fincantieri, for the construction of two more ocean cruise ships with an option for another two.

The duo will be twins to those ordered earlier this year, and will weigh in at 48,000 gross tons.

"This additional order indicates just how strong early response has been to our ocean cruise concept which focuses on small ship destination cruising at a great value.

We are very excited to have Fincantieri as a partner as we work to bring the destination back to ocean cruising," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking.

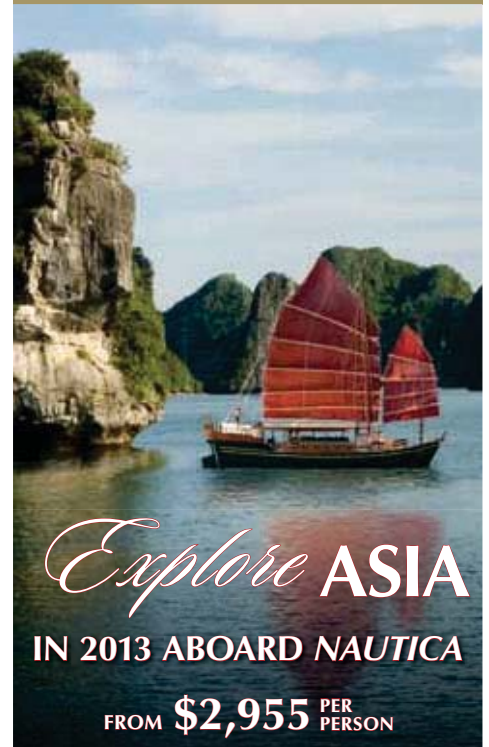
onboard products such as shore tours and dining; destinations; and selling technology including documentation and POLAR Online.

The P&O Cruises and Princess Cruises Academy now boast more than 8000 registered travel agents across Australia and New Zealand, with feedback showing more than 95% of participants would recommend the programs to colleagues.

Participation is free.

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

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Gastronomic Odyssey

COMPAGNIE du Ponant has partnered with French magazine *Cuisine et Vins de France* for a new 2013 Gastronomic Odyssey onboard *L'Austral* around Andalusia, the Balearic Islands and Costa Brava.

Priced from \$3,268pp/ts, the 8-night cruise departs from Malaga to Marseilles on 13 Apr, and is accompanied by experts from *Cuisine et Vins de France*, see www.traveltheworld.com.au.

Darwin looks at port savings

DARWIN Port Corporation (DPC) has authorised a series of measures to insure its continuing operation, whilst avoiding debt.

The measures include a \$1.3m reduction in repairs and maintenance expenditure by undertaking more work utilising DPC's existing maintenance workforce; adopting an alternative model to the DPC advisory board and the engagement of a two person expert panel (savings of \$135,000 annually); and a staged reduction of positions through natural attrition and lowering operational costs, including travel and corporate support costs (savings of \$1.05m in 2012-13 increasing to \$2.08m a year by 2015-16).

The DPC has also committed to a full port pricing review to better balance the use of the DPC infrastructure and services against the income generated.

MEANWHILE the DPC praised the current cruise season, saying "the bumper cruise ship season is providing a welcome boost at this time to the Territory economy with four cruise ships berthing at Darwin Harbour in the last few days and another to arrive on Friday".

It is estimated cruise passengers spent \$8.1m while ashore in Darwin last financial year.

P&O caves to demand

P&O CRUISES UK has added another 12-night North Cape Northern Lights voyage for 2013 onboard *Oriana*, to cater to "unprecedented interest".

Departing on 01 Mar 2013, the voyage includes an extended evening stay on Alta, www.pocruises.com.

P&O Save the Children

P&O Australia has donated \$50,000 to Save the Children, an independent emergency relief and development organisation that funds community health and education projects in the Pacific Islands.

As part of the new P&O Pacific Partnership initiative, the cruise line's passengers will also donate \$1 via their onboard account with the aim of raising \$1 million over four years.

The first project will help a kindergarten in the northern Vanuatu province of Sanma.

As well as cash donations, P&O passengers will be able to take a hands-on approach with an onboard knitting program, Born to Knit, producing blankets for newborn babies throughout the Pacific.

Adults-only Fantasia space

MSC Cruises will equip its Fantasia class vessels: *MSC Splendida*, *MSC Fantasia*, *MSC Divina* and *MSC Preziosa* with adults-only sanctuaries, replete with solariums, spa service, exclusive bar menus and expansive deck space.

"With its own dedicated spa service, bar menu and complimentary delicious fruit skewers, Top 18 is the perfect place to relax, unwind, and watch the waves go by," MSC Cruises said in a statement.

The space, titled Top 18 Exclusive Solarium, will be available from the start of the Northern Hemisphere 2013 summer season.



NOW that's a tight fit.

Think getting into your summer swimsuit is going to be tight? Spare a thought for the Captain of *Seabourn Pride*, who managed to navigate the Corinth Canal in Greece on her way from Europe to Asia.

The Canal connects the Gulf of Corinth with the Saronic Gulf in the Aegean Sea in a 6.4 kilometre long stretch which measures a tight 21.3 metres in width.

The squeeze was impressive given that *Pride* is measures a healthy 19.2 in width herself.

The photo (right) was taken by *Pride's* Hotel Director Nick Burger who went ashore and positioned himself on a bridge to snap the perfect shot.



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Cruise Weekly is free and is sent to subscribers via email as an Adobe Acrobat PDF document.

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