



Smith reveals RCC strategy for 2012

Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises will start the year with aggressive pricing and highly visual campaigns that focus on ship features, rather than itineraries.

GAVIN Smith, general manager, Royal Caribbean Cruises Australia, has told *Cruise Weekly* that the company's two local brands are set for an exciting new direction.

"Royal and Celebrity are bringing two of the world's best ships down here, so for the first time in Australia, I think ships will become the destination, and the ports of call will be complementary," he said.

Agents can expect to see a strong marketing push for *Voyager of the Seas* and *Celebrity Solstice* over the next few months.

"Until now we have been focused on telling the consumer about the current summer season, but in Jan/Feb we will be delivering the imagery on the onboard amenities – the ship will be the hero.

"We will bring the visual appeal of the ships to life during the first half of the year, and I am very confident that we can generate a lot of excitement."

The new *Voyager* campaign is designed to highlight the introduction of the Dreamworks program, which was quietly announced last year.

"We haven't wanted to confuse people who might think they would get the Dreamworks characters and parades and breakfasts on *Radiance* and *Rhapsody*, but now we will really be promoting our great family appeal."

The *Solstice* advertising will highlight unique features such as the Lawn Club.

Pricing for both brands will be "very genuine, to make us more relevant as a holiday option," Smith said.

"I don't think we can leave aggressive pricing until later in the year because those passengers will just travel with someone else."

The arrival of the two new ships will also affect the focus of others ships in the fleet next season.

"As agents will note in the summer deployments for 2012-13, our ships are spending a lot of time in Australia, and not so much time in the South Pacific, so *Voyager* and *Solstice* will become our Australia-New Zealand ships and *Radiance* and *Rhapsody* will become our South Pacific ships," Smith said.

"This is because the Royal and Celebrity model is very dependent on Americans and Europeans travelling to Australia – 35-50% of our guests are inbound – and they are most interested in coastal Australia and New Zealand."

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's trade issue of *Cruise Weekly* features four pages of news and photos.

InnerSea expands Alaska

INNERSEA Discoveries has added a third ship to its 2012 Alaskan program, the 76-guest *Wilderness Explorer*.

The vessel will join the 60-guest *Wilderness Adventurer* and 76-guest *Wilderness Discoverer* vessels in the region, and will offer a new Northern Passages and Glacier Bay itinerary between Juneau and Sitka, bringing the cruise line's Alaskan itinerary offering to ten (ranging between seven- and 21-days).

InnerSea launched its inaugural season last year to sell-out success, with the company's executive vp of sales and marketing Jim Jacox saying, "The success of our operations in Alaska affirms our belief that there is pent-up demand for this style of close-up, active, adventure travel at a moderate price".

Pricing for the new itinerary starts at US\$3,095pp, see www.smallshipadventure.com.

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ICCA UPDATE

ICCA General Manager,
Brett Jardine

Cruise Pricing

Often misunderstood is the way (and the reasons why) cruise lines set pricing for different itineraries.

From a cruise line perspective there are two primary objectives:

- Fill every cabin
- Achieve the highest price possible

Filling every cabin is potentially more important to the cruise lines than the second as they don't save a significant amount of money for each cabin that sails empty.

Empty cabins also don't generate on board revenue.

Analysts will try to predict demand by looking at how similar sailings have been in the past and they consider current factors like the state of the economy, demand from different source markets and changes in capacity.

Then, they make an educated estimate (or guess!) as to how high they can price the various cabin categories to still fill a particular departure.

Itinerary pricing will generally be higher over peak times (school holidays and warmer months in different cruise regions); when sailing to popular destinations; when departing from easy-to-reach ports; on newer ships and for cabin categories with limited availability such as triples, quads or suites.

Once pricing is released it is a bit of a waiting game to see how bookings progress.

If they've estimated too low and a particular sail date is filling up faster than expected, they will raise the price.

If bookings are slow, then they lower prices or add incentives such as on board credits or even reduced deposits to try to stimulate demand.



Travel Partners with Ecrusing group

A new avenue for independent travel agents to expand their cruise sales has opened, with the creation of a partnership between the Ecrusing group and Travel Partners.

THE new partnership agreement formed between the pair includes the stipulation that Ecrusing's wholesale division, cruiseagents.travel, will act as Travel Partners exclusive wholesale cruise provider.

An all Australian company, Travel Partners opened its doors in Jul last year, providing independent travel agents who want to establish their own travel consultancy with a platform from which to operate, including support, travel product and information technology systems.

Speaking about Travel Partners latest venture, managing director, Jeff Hakim told *Cruise Weekly* that the company had entered into the partnership as a strategic move to increase the booking capacity of Travel Partner agents.

Hakim told *Cruise Weekly* that whilst the company is an experienced provider of cruise product, the partnership would enhance its cruise services "because cruiseagents.travel will be providing selected and exclusive cruise itineraries to the cruise network".

The agreement, according to Hakim, will mean better deals and also exclusive deals for its agents, in addition to better commission rates.

"We see a big future for cruising with our Travel Partner network," he said.

As part of the deal Travel Partners will have access to Ecrusing's technology cruise platform which incorporates live pricing and API feeds which will give Travel Partners home based agents real time pricing for most lines.

"It means they can compete in the open market not just with price but superior

product range and technology," said Brett Dudley the founder and chairman of the Ecrusing group.

Although the company has always dealt with independent agents, Ecrusing, according to Dudley, is currently in similar discussions with other companies to offer its portfolio of air, cruise and hotel product "to give them a competitive edge over the bigger chains".

"That's what we are about, giving agents a democratic option," he said.

"The growth of the independent professional travel agent is growing exponentially and they are prolific bookers of cruise product.

"The agreement clearly indicates we are on the road to open the awareness that a cruise holiday is a great option for agents to sell to their clients, especially packages like ours that really all the agents have to do is sell and we do the rest," he added.

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Auctioning a Pacific Pearl

CRUISE lovers are being offered the opportunity to own a part of P&O Cruises history, with the announcement that it will auction *Pacific Pearl's* official Port of Call Chart.

The Chart details all the ports *Pearl* visited during 2011 and the eBay auction is in celebration of the superliner's first birthday.

Proceeds of the sale will go to P&O Cruises' charities, to view the auction [CLICK HERE](#).

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Carnival to launch consumer site

Discover Cruising, a new resource that helps first-timers choose a cruise, will be heavily marketed online.

SIMON Cheng, director of marketing, Carnival Australia, has revealed the company's latest tool to lure new clients:

www.discovercruising.com.au.

"It's launching soon and it will be much bigger than a blog," he said.

"It's all about tackling our biggest challenge – finding more new cruisers."

Rather than expecting consumers to immediately choose a destination or ship, the website asks people to specify if they are a family, couple or 'empty nesters' and then to select activities that interest them.

"It talks to people who haven't cruised before, and we think this is the best way to get into their hearts and minds," Cheng said.

Discover Cruising, which looks similar to the P&O consumer site, will be linked to other personal interest and media sites, relying on people to click through on the ad.

"For example, if someone likes photography, we'll have links to a photography article in National Geographic; if they're planning a wedding, we'll have links from wedding sites; if you're a health freak, we will have a link to a health site with a story on how to keep fit on a ship," Cheng said.

Speaking at the recent partnership summit, Cheng also detailed the success of P&O's latest consumer marketing campaign, 'Landlubbers Wanted'.

"It was an act of supreme confidence, a risky venture, but we were willing to put money where our mouth was," he said.

"We thought we could convert landlubbers into cruisers and it worked – all 14 loved it and they are even planning a reunion."

Cheng urged agents to share the landlubbers' videos with clients and to make the most of all of P&O's marketing initiatives throughout 2012, its 80th year of operation in Australia.

"Next year is a real landmark year," he said.

Meanwhile, P&O's "Facebook army" has doubled in less than a year to 54,000 fans.

"Facebook has been fantastic – it's marketing gold," Cheng said.



ENTER the fifth dimension onboard.

Carnival Cruise Lines is promising to take guests beyond the fourth dimension, with its newest entertainment feature 'Thrill 5D Theatre' set to debut on the soon to launch *Carnival Breeze*.

The experience sees guests fitted with 3D glasses so that images come out towards them, whilst effects such as squirting water, and wind which tickles necks and legs propels them into the fourth dimension at appropriate spots during the movie.

The fifth dimension is then created via movie seats which move and vibrate at pivotal points in the movie.

As for the movies which will take guests to the fifth dimension, Carnival has confirmed that Happy Feet, Speed Racer Adventure and the Polar Express will feature in the line-up.



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Azamara discounts Europe

AZAMARA Club Cruises is celebrating the new year with airfare offers to Europe starting from \$499 when combined with selected *Azamara Journey* and *Azamara Quest* voyages.

The offer includes return economy airfares from \$499, \$999 and \$1,499 departing from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, and is valid for new, individual Oceanview stateroom (or higher) bookings on 27 Azamara Club Europe 2012 cruises booked before 31 Mar.

See www.azamaraclubcruises.com.

New marketing Captain

RICHARD Doyle has been appointed as the new head of Sales and Marketing at Captain Cook Cruises and will be responsible for Captain Cook Cruises' Sydney and Murray River Cruise product globally.

Doyle comes to the position having spent the last two years as an independent consultant.

In addition Doyle served as the chair of Cruise Down Under from 2002 to 2010.

"Richard brings with him strategic skills, digital platform knowledge and a very strong International and Australian business to business network," a company statement said.

Doyle will replace Jackie Charlton who has headed Captain Cook Cruises' Sales and Marketing team for over a decade.

Charlton will now concentrate on the promotion and operation of Captain Cook Cruises Fiji.

Discounts for the Lady M

DISCOUNTS of 15% off the usual price of all Lady M Luxury Cruises' 2012 eight-day and 14-day Kimberley Coast itineraries are currently being offered by Broome & The Kimberley Holidays for bookings made before 31 March.

Prices for the voyages start from \$5,990pp/pts and include a bonus complimentary night at the Mercure Broome prior to the cruise.

In addition, the company has also scrapped the single supplement for eight-day and 14-day Lady M Kimberley voyages booked before 31 Mar.

See www.broomekimberley.com.au.

Variety Discovers Australia

DISCOVER the World Marketing in Australia has been selected by small ship operator Variety Cruises to broaden the cruise line's sales and marketing efforts in Australia and NZ.

Variety Cruises features four mega yachts: the 72-cabin *Variety Voyager* (launching this year), the 25-cabin *Harmony V*, the 22-cabin *Harmony G* and the 23-cabin *Pegasus*.

The cruise line also has a three-masted 25-cabin sail cruiser *Panorama* and a two-masted 25-cabin sail cruiser *Panorama II*, as well as the 26-cabin motor sailer *Galileo*.

Destinations covered by the cruise line include Greece and the Greek Islands, Turkey, West Africa, the Adriatic, South Italy, Malta, the South of France and the Arabian Gulf.

See www.varietycruises.com.

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