

APT's preview brochure sales up 92%

Europe's 2013 cruise season is predicted to be "very big" based on exceptional early demand for APT cruises.

WITH the new brochure containing 78 itineraries, 40% more than 2012, APT is stimulating an already fertile river-cruising market, according to gm marketing, Debra Fox.

The company saw a 92% increase in sales from its preview brochure, compared to last year, which was buoyed by the offer of 2012 prices.

"Judging by the fabulous take-up of the preview brochure, demand is obviously very strong, and that's coming through the trade from their clients who want another APT cruise and first-time river cruise clients who have become aware of the 98% customer satisfaction rate of our cruise experience," Fox said.

"We are catering for that demand with new rivers and new ships as well as enhancements to our core product, like the choice of an additional restaurant on Aria class ships."

The new 200-page brochure launched this week carries all-inclusive small group tours throughout Europe and 12 "luxury boutique" river ship cruising on 14 waterways.

It also includes a Top 50, listing "50 reasons why APT is the first choice when it comes to European river cruising", Fox said.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of **CW** features 4 pages news.

Lead-in prices for the 15-day 'Magnificent Europe' cruise between Amsterdam and Budapest start at \$6,445pp/ts, including meals, beer and wine with lunch and dinner, tours and tipping.

New options include the 18-day 'Romantic Seine & Rhine', priced from \$9,695pp/ts, which includes three nights in Paris; and the 11-day 'Enticing Douro' aboard the new *MS AmaVida*, priced from \$3,445pp/ts, including three nights in Lisbon.

Fox said the company "would like to recognise and thank the trade for its ongoing support in cementing APT as the leader in a market that was enjoying healthy competition."

She said APT was "geared up for a very big 2013 season" and trade partners could maximise commission on cruise inclusions through the tour price and Super Deals.

For details, see www.aptgroup.travel.

Celebrity's suite offers

CELEBRITY Cruises has expanded the range of offerings and amenities for suite guests, to include its eXhale bedding program (which provides "premium mattresses", 100% Egyptian cotton linens, and plush pillows and bedding).

Other suite extras include Bvlgari bath products; dual iPod/iPad docking stations; reserved theater seating, and an upgraded "welcome" bottle of Blanc de Blanc sparkling wine, complete with a commemorative label featuring exclusive artwork from ArtCenter/South Florida artists.

American Queen christened

ONE American queen, Priscilla Presley, christened another *American Queen* last Friday at a jazzy ceremony in Memphis.

"It is such an honour to be here today to take part in this special occasion, which will forever change the landscape of Memphis," said Presley.

"Just like the blues, just like barbecue and, yes, just like Elvis Presley, it's going to be a part of Memphis," she added.

American Queen is the largest paddlewheel steamboat ever built, and underwent a complete overhaul and refit following her purchase from the US Maritime Administration last year.

Following her christening *American Queen* departed on her maiden voyage along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, stopping in Kentucky and Indiana.

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ICCA UPDATE

ICCA General Manager,
Brett Jardine

Spotlight on ICCA Passenger Statistics

There has certainly been plenty of positive media coverage around this week's release of our Australian Cruise Industry Report for 2011 – but what does it mean for you?

Statistics and graphs may not be the sort of thing that many of you choose to look at in your spare time but I would urge you to take a moment to digest where the Australian cruise industry is at and consider the positive implications of this report for the entire region.

The 34% growth in Australians cruising closely mirrored the increase in capacity in local waters that we experienced in 2011.

We have had a history of utilising the available capacity locally and this also puts our long term growth in a good position with repeat cruise passengers looking further afield for their next cruise.

One of the most exciting statistics to come out of the ICCA report is the fact that Australia's market/population penetration rate has now reached 2.7%.

This is a figure that is closely monitored by Cruise Line executives that will give them the confidence to continue their focus on deploying ships into our waters.

More ships in our local waters are one of the driving factors behind a growing consumer awareness of cruising which is driving greater demand through our retail distribution channels.

New data released as part of our report this year showed where Australian cruise passengers reside.

Interesting was the disproportionate number coming from QLD (24%) over VIC (16%) given a similar population base.

For once it is not NSW being thrashed by QLD!

Come on Victoria, the challenge has been set for 2012.

We will be releasing the New Zealand Cruise Industry report next Tue.



NCL swings to first quarter profit

Norwegian Cruise Line has reported positive Q1 results.

REVERSING a US\$7.9 million net loss this time last year, NCL Corporation Ltd has recorded a net profit of US\$3.3 million for the quarter ended 31 Mar 2012.

Norwegian's revenue was US\$515.4 million, a 4% increase on the same period in 2011.

Net revenue grew 4.6% from an increase in net yield and a 2.3% increase in capacity days.

Net yield also increased 2.2%, as a result of higher average ticket pricing and increased onboard revenue, particularly in tours and gaming operations.

Operating income grew 23.8% to US\$46.4 million, with adjusted EBITDA posting a 10.3% increase to US\$93.5 million, from strong revenue performance and the benefits of ongoing business improvement initiatives.

Costs increased slightly, by 0.6%, but improved efficiencies offset a 15% increase in the cost of fuel.

"It is always rewarding to report strong top-to-bottom results," said Kevin Sheehan, NCL president and CEO.

"Revenue growth was very positive, considering the impact of redeploying *Norwegian Jade* in late 2011 due to

geopolitical disruptions in Egypt and the surrounding region," he added.

New European chairman

CAPTAIN Michael McCarthy of the Port of Cork, Ireland, has been elected as the new chairman of industry association, Cruise Europe.

McCarthy comes to the role with over 40 years worth of maritime experience, and will replace outgoing chairman, Dirk Moldenhauer.



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Carnival strong on Garden Is

CARNIVAL Australia is not giving up on the plan to berth cruise ships ad hoc at Sydney's Garden Island, despite the release of the Government funded Hawke Report, which determined that particular berthing solution was "essentially incompatible".

Currently a naval base, many cruise companies had pinned their hopes on Garden Island as a long-term berthing option for ships that cannot fit under the bridge.

Despite the negative recommendation, Carnival Australia's ceo, and long-time champion of the solution, Ann Sherry said that "sorting out cruise ship berth arrangements in Sydney has never been more urgent with an increasing number of cruise ships having to anchor mid harbour because of the lack of suitable berths".

"A three berth solution with White Bay, the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay and shared use of Garden Island on an ad hoc basis during peak cruise periods, is still the best option for Sydney," she said.

To that end, Carnival Australia has said that it "looks forward" to further discussions with the State and Federal Govts to resolve infrastructure issues including shared use of Garden Island.

Genting gets its new Dream

PARENT company of Star Cruises, Genting Hong Kong, has secured the 2,150-passenger *Norwegian Dream*.

According to reports, *Dream* will join the fleet after an extensive refurbishment.

"We look forward to returning the *SuperStar Aquarius* for a second seasonal deployment in Hainan, and the deployment of *Norwegian Dream* in the region, after her refurbishment," said Genting ceo Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay.

PortMiami scores Divina

MSC Cruises will base its newest vessel *MSC Divina* in the Port of Miami (PortMiami) between Nov 2013 and May 2014, where she will feature a series of Caribbean itineraries.

"We're very excited to kick off our new relationship with PortMiami," said Richard Sasso, President and CEO of MSC Cruises.

The news follows a decision by the cruise line earlier in the year to move its homeporting out of Port Everglades and into PortMiami for Caribbean itineraries (**CW** 27 Feb).

The move is likely to take effect in late 2013, leaving *MSC Poesia* sailing out of Port Everglades during the 2012-13 season.

P O R T H O L E

SEASICKNESS on land!

A 71-year old woman, Barbara Farrand, has been diagnosed with one of the world's stranger illnesses, Mal de Debarquement Syndrome, which gives her the symptoms of sea sickness whilst she is on land.

Bizarrely this condition goes away when sufferers are sailing at sea.

Farrand, who is an avid cruiser with an impressive 47 voyages under her belt, was not born with the illness, but rather first noticed the symptoms of the condition after returning home from her 47th voyage.

She told media that she found herself "staggering around my home as if drunk, falling over daily, having to cling to furniture to stay upright".

According to experts in the field of Mal de Debarquement Syndrome, the condition is exceptionally rare, but that it is a lot more common in females than in males.

At this stage, we have no cure – other than suggesting to sufferers they turn around and go back to sea again," said one researcher.

Fire ravages InnerSea Discoveries' Safari Spirit

INNERSEA Discoveries has suffered a rather large blow after a fire ripped through its small adventure ship *Safari Spirit*, whilst it was docked at Fisherman's Terminal in Salmon Bay, Seattle.

The 12-guest 105-foot vessel was in the midst of preparations for its first cruise of the year from Juneau, which would have kicked off its Alaskan summer season.

The Alaskan run would have been followed by a series of Columbia and Snake River cruises through the American Pacific Northwest, towards the tail end of the year.

Unfortunately however, the fire has put an end to *Safari Spirit's* adventures with the damage so extensive that the vessel has been declared a "constructive loss".

The fire started at around 1am last Friday, and raged until around 5am, engulfing much of the boat, with firefighters having to pour so much water onto the vessel that it began to list.

Fortunately the ship's aluminum hull kept it from sinking, and firemen were able to pump water out so they could keep on dousing the flames.

There was also no fuel spillage into the

water, with the Coast Guard able to put an absorbent boom around *Spirit* to contain any oil that may have escaped.

Only two people were on board when the fire started, InnerSea Discoveries owner Dan Blanchard and an engineer, both of whom managed to escape without injury after waking to the fire.

At present the cause of the fire is unknown, and investigations are underway to discover its origin.

Passengers due to set sail onboard *Spirit* are being offered alternative cruises onboard other fleet members, and for those that cannot change the cruise company has said compensation will be worked out on a "case by case basis".



CCC's first Fiji golf cruise

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is branching out, with its first ever seven-night Golf Cruise in Fiji.

Departing on 11 Sep 2012 onboard the *Reef Endeavour*, the voyage will circumnavigate Viti Levu and will visit the region's top golf courses.

"Fiji has some fantastic golf courses and a lot of our passengers love golf, so we thought why not offer a cruise where passengers will have the chance to play golf at some of Fiji's leading courses and still discover the beauty of the real Fiji," said Captain Cook Cruises Fiji's md Jackie Charlton.

The voyage gives guests the option to play at: Denarau Golf Course, the Koro Sun Resort at Savusavu, the Fiji Golf Club, Pacific Harbour's Pearl Champion Course and the Natadola Golf Course; whilst those that are not keen on golf can instead enjoy tours and water activities, or can make use of the resort facilities at Savusavu, Pacific Harbour and Natadola.

Prices for the voyage start from FJ\$2,849pp (approx AU\$1,550), whilst the Golfer Package is an additional FJ\$550pp (approx AU\$300).

See www.captaincook.com.fj.

Cunard's seven day sale

CUNARD launched a seven-day sale this week, which ends at 11.59pm on 07 May.

The sale enables guests to book balcony staterooms at oceanview prices on a range of 2013 world voyage sectors.

The deal sees prices for balcony staterooms onboard QM2's 16-night Hong Kong to Brisbane voyage, departing 17 Feb 2013, start from \$3,440pp/ts.

See www.myccs.com.au for details.

Tauck adds free hotels

TAUCK'S new Time On Tauck promotion gives Australian cruises the option to extend their cruise holiday pre- or post- cruise with two free hotel nights.

In addition, the company is offering a "multiplier" component to the deal, meaning that guests who book more than one cruise and/or tour will be able to amass two more nights for each cruise or tour booked.

The deal is valid for 2013 cruise and/or tour bookings made between now and 30 Dec.

See www.traveltheworld.com.au.

Dubai sets its sights on gulf cruise boom

DUBAI Tourism is firmly focused on the rapidly growing cruise sector, with its already huge terminal facilities undergoing significant expansion.

Currently Dubai is able to handle five large ships and more than 9000 passengers a day, but has two more terminals under development.

"We want to become the Miami of the Middle East," according to Hamad Bin Mejren from the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, who spoke to **CW** in Dubai yesterday at Arabian Travel Market.

The vision is that Dubai will be the cruise hub of the region, aiming to attract more homeported vessels to allow visitors to experience various Middle Eastern ports.

And the figures speak for themselves, with cruise ship calls growing from just five in 2003 to 115 this year - and projections this will



climb to 145 in 2015, with a total of 500,000 cruise passengers.

The turning point, according to Bin Mejren, was in 2006 when Costa Cruises and German operator AIDA decided to homeport ships in Dubai during the northern winter.

Royal Caribbean soon followed and TUI Cruises will also join the Dubai trend this year, with DTCM saying "we are doing all we can to make our region attractive for cruising".

The Dubai cruise terminal facilities offer a great experience, with shops, VIP lounges, money exchanges, conference rooms and even free wi-fi internet access.

Mejren said that negotiation with other cruise companies about Dubai homeporting are also underway - and the emirate is also a popular port of call for round-world cruises.

The amazing hotel infrastructure in Dubai provides for easy pre and post accommodation and the city's aviation connectivity also makes fly-cruises very simple to package.

Cruise visitors are also able to experience a range of unique ground activities such as desert safaris, spa treatments and even skiing.

Pictured above on the Dubai Cruise Terminal stand at Arabian Travel Market in Dubai yesterday are, from left: Suresh Babu, Senior Executive, Cruise Tourism; Hamad Mohammed Bin Mejren, Dubai Tourism Executive Director of Business Tourism; Jamal Salem Saif Humaid Al Falasi, Director, Cruise Tourism; and Saeed Bin Touq, Cruise Tourism Officer.

Agents wave farewell to Sea Princess in style



A GROUP of cruise loving Queensland agents were invited onboard *Sea Princess* to say their farewells to the lady ahead of her departure from regional waters last month.

The lunch marked the end to a bumper season for agents onboard 19 Carnival Australia ships, with the company having gone out of its way to showcase what its vessels have

to offer, by inviting nearly 2,500 agents onboard for walkarounds, and a further 350 for voyages.

Pictured at lunch onboard *Sea Princess* is (from left) Stephanie Kelly, Flight Centre Carindale; Karen Wolf-Thom, Travel Counsellors; Helen Mezzan, business partnership manager, Queensland; Heidi Smithers, Travel Counsellors; Debbie Oram, Travel Counsellors; and Nathan Butterworth, Flight Centre, Carindale.

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