

Costa recovery starts with new ships

The launch of *Costa Fascinosa* and two newbuild orders are anticipated to revive the maligned company.

OPTIMISTIC executives believe that Costa Cruises is on track for a better year following the christening of its latest vessel, held at the Fincantieri shipyard in Venice on Saturday.

"The delivery of *Costa Fascinosa* is an important steppingstone on our company's road to recovery," said chairman and ceo Pier Luigi Foschi.

The US\$665 million, 3,800-pax superliner, which has 13 bars and five restaurants, is the largest-ever Italian-flagged cruise ship.

As the number-one travel company in Italy, Costa's choice of godmother for *Fascinosa* – the daughter of the federal tourism minister – reflected the national importance of the cruise line's success.

According to Foschi, Costa has "bounced back", with booking volumes returning to the same level recorded for this period last year.

The company has an even bigger 4,928-pax 'Super Costa' ship due for delivery in Oct 2014 and looks set to take up the option for a second newbuild.

A focus on improved safety is also behind the line's comeback since the tragic sinking of *Costa Concordia* on 13 Jan.

Plans include increased sharing of navigation information between the captain and officers, and changes that will allow more crew members to issue orders.

"According to the new model, the captain maintains intervention power as required by law, but is no longer the only person who issues orders," a Costa document said.

Share your cruise photos

CRYSTAL Cruises has launched a new iPhone app which allows cruisers to share custom "postcard" images from their voyages via social media, email and the post.

The Storyteller photo-customisation app allows users to snap a pic, and then customise it using special effects, and is available free from the iTunes store.

Other safety measures include the installation of real-time route-monitoring systems on all Costa ships and restricted access to the bridge during critical navigation phases.

Passengers' attendance at muster drills, which are now to be conducted before leaving port, will also be tracked through the use of electronic cards.

Guests who miss the initial session will be invited to attend a drill the following day.

For clients seeking further information, a new website page called "Us for You" is now available at www.costacruise.com, providing details on the new safety measures, crew training and ship maintenance.



Costa Fascinosa

Aurora cancels *Shokalskiy*

QUESTIONS over the continued operation of adventure cruising specialist Aurora Expeditions have been addressed by the cruise line, with a spokesperson telling *Cruise Weekly* that the company has made an early cancellation of its short term charter of the vessel *Akademik Shokalskiy* which was due to run until March 2013.

Akademik Shokalskiy joined the Aurora fleet in 2011.

Although the spokesperson did not comment further on the charter, the company did say that despite the cancellation, it will still continue operate its traditional program of voyages to Scotland, the European Arctic, Antarctica, the Kimberley Coast and Papua New Guinea in 2012/2013.

Stay tuned to **CW** for more Aurora updates next week.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

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

Win a bottle of Veuve

TO celebrate the launch of its 2013 Europe River Cruising Program, Scenic Tours is offering agents the chance to win a bottle of much-coveted Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin.

To be in the running, agents need to submit a photo with their Scenic Tours Business Development Manager dressed up as a Scenic butler.

The competition is a quirky and fun way of raising industry awareness of Scenic's new all inclusive 2013 River Cruising program which launched this month, and which will see every guest able to make use of the company's Butler service, and also enjoy all day grazing, complementary drinks (including alcohol), free Wi-Fi internet access, new shore excursions, and additional dining options.

To be in the running to win the Veuve, send your photo to promotions@scenictours.com by 5pm on 08 Jun 2012.

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Consumer Awareness

One of the major aims of the International Cruise Council when it was founded in 1996 was to boost the profile of cruise holidays with consumers from all walks of life.

Since that time we have worked closely with all forms of media throughout Australia and New Zealand to encourage cruising as a holiday option amongst consumers and to ensure they visit cruise-savvy travel agents for advice on the right ship experience for them.

With the latest release of our Cruise Industry annual report we have already begun seeing positive news stories and cruise features in national media highlighting the massive variety of cruise holidays available, the many ships that will call in Down Under over the year ahead and the great value achieved from the current strength of our currency.

This provides an excellent environment for Council-accredited travel agents to introduce cruising to clients who may not have considered taking a holiday at sea before.

Don't forget to use these articles as tools to educate your clients about the wide variety of cruise holidays available.

Many of them focus on first-hand accounts of life onboard that paint a picture of exactly how relaxing and stimulating cruising can be – often accompanied by evocative images.

Remember, a picture can be worth a thousand words!

The Council will continue to work closely with the media to keep cruising top-of-mind with travellers, particularly emphasising the cruise industry's impressive growth and expansion but at the end of the day it's up to you to close the deal!

Hapag-Lloyd launches *Europa* for 2013

The highest ranked cruise ship in the world is offering luxury cruises next year to New Zealand, Australia, the South Pacific and Asia.

HAPAG-Lloyd Cruises has released its latest international brochure for *MS Europa*, with seven itineraries operating in English and German and two maiden calls in NZ and the Cook Islands.

Kicking off the program is an 18-day 'South Seas' voyage from Papeete (Tahiti) to Auckland, via Bora Bora and Raiatea (French Polynesia), Rarotonga, Aitutaki Atoll and Palmerston Atoll (maiden call) in the Cook Islands, Neiafu and Nuku'alofa (Tonga) and the Fiji islands.

Departing 19 Jan 2013, this cruise is priced from US\$7,700 per person twin-share.

The ship then sails around New Zealand on a 16-night voyage to Sydney, stopping in Tauranga, White Island, Napier, Wellington, Nelson, Picton (maiden call), Lyttelton, Akaroa, Port Chalmers and Stewart Island.

Fares start at US\$9,220pp twin-share.

Shifting to Asia, *Europa* spends two weeks (30 Mar-13 Apr) from Singapore to Dubai, visiting Malaysia, Sri Lanka and India.

This itinerary allows the opportunity for excursions (for an additional fee) to Malacca, the holy city of Anuradhapura and the Taj Mahal.

Other highlights of the 2013 brochure include cruises in Norway, the Baltics and the Mediterranean.

New to *Europa* from 12 Apr 2013, children aged under 12 travel free of charge when sharing a suite with one or two full-price adult guests.

Teens aged 12-15 sharing a suite with two full-price passengers pay US\$60 per night, which includes soft drinks during lunch and dinner onboard.

Two classical music theme cruises will also be held in the European spring.

For details, contact Landmark Travel on 1300 136 846.

Ultimate Rail Cruise trip

THIS year Broome & The Kimberley Holidays is offering three departures (21 Jun, 12 Jul and 02 Aug) for its 18-night Ultimate Rail Cruise itinerary.

Priced from \$11,999pp (incl a \$500 discount when booked by 30 Jun 2012) the package includes accom at the Cable Beach resort & Spa, and at the Novotel Darwin; a 10-night Kimberley cruise; travel on the Ghan from Adelaide to Darwin; plus some land tours.

See www.broomekimberley.com.au.

Cruise Office appointments

CRUISE Office has been appointed as the Australian representative for the Great American Steamboat Company.

Amongst the company's stable of vessels is the newly christened *American Queen*, the largest passenger steamboat ever built and which has just returned to the Mississippi River after a massive overhaul (**CW** 03 May).

For enquires, brochures or assistance with sales and marketing, call (02) 9959-1300.

MEANWHILE Cruise Office has also welcomed cruise guru Craig Owens back into the fold, as its director, Key Accounts & Communications.

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VIEW OFFER

Agent scores pure gold

ALISON Hunt from Phil Hoffman Travel Stirling, South Australia, is the envy of all her peers, having secured herself a one ounce solid gold nugget as part of a P&O Cruises and Princess Cruises Academy promotion.

According to market price, the nugget is valued at \$1,600, and was awarded to Hunt for her efforts rising through the ranks of P&O Cruises' Academy to become a P&O Commodore, during the Go for Gold promotion which ran late last year.

Hunt is pictured below with her new loot.



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Orion Kimberley savings

ORION Expedition Cruises is currently offering savings of up to 20% off the brochured fares of selected *Orion* Kimberley Expedition cruises between 02 Jul and 10 Sep 2012.

Fares begin from \$9,100pp for an ocean view Category B Stateroom onboard selected *Orion* 10-night Darwin to Broome voyages.

Plus as an added bonus, guests will enjoy a complimentary two-hour Bungle Bungle ranges flight.

For details see www.orionexpeditions.com.

Captain expands Murray

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises has expanded its Murray River cruise options, with a second seven night Renmark cruise on the Murray River, aboard the *PS Murray Princess*.

Departing Mannum on 03 Dec 2012 the voyage will take in over 42kms of the Murray River, including passage through five locks, Portee Bar, Kingston On Murray, Cobdogla and Moorook.

The cruise is priced from \$1,643pp/ts, see www.captaincook.com.au.

View RCCL's playful moments

ROYAL Caribbean has uploaded another video onto its site, designed to familiarise viewers with the brand and all that it has to offer.

Titled "Little Cruisers, Big Fun: Playful Moments with Fisher-Price at Sea", the video takes viewers on a journey through the cruise line's kids program.

To view the video **CLICK HERE**.

Round the World with Avalon

AVALON Waterways has released a round-the-world holiday package which combines a 15-day European rivercruise between Budapest and Amsterdam with stopovers in the US and Asia.

All-up the package is 23-days and features Star Alliance round-the-world airfares, a 15-day Magnificent Europe river cruise, a four-day Monograms stopover in New York and a free bonus four-day stopover in either Singapore, Hong Kong or Bangkok.

The package is priced from \$11,142pp/ts from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, or from \$11,814pp/ts from Adelaide and Perth, and is available for booking until 30 Sep 2012 (or until sold out) for travel between 01 Apr and 30 Dec 2013.

See www.avalonwaterways.com.au.

P O R T H O L E

LOUDER than a cruise liner horn.

Cyclists can now attract more attention than the QM2, with the new Hornster bicycle which is equipped with a horn that is louder than one on a cruise ship and louder than a Concorde plane.

Fitted with a triple air horn which is attached to an Airchime KH3A from an American locomotive that runs off a scuba diving cylinder, the bike's warning signal can go as loud as 178 decibels, enough to deafen both motorist and cyclist should it be honked in anger.

Virtuoso Road Show winners

SILVERSEA Cruises took out the number one top selling cruise line spot for Virtuoso, as announced at the annual Virtuoso Australian Road Show in Melbourne, followed by: Seabourn, Regent Seven Seas, Crystal Cruises, SeaDream Yacht Club and Paul Gauguin Cruises.

For the first time ever, the top four cruise lines; Silversea Cruises, Seabourn, Regent Seven Sea and Crystal, also used the event to dish out special awards to their top selling agencies and travel advisors.

Winners included: Travel Concept's Cruise Centre (Silversea award accepted by David Brandon), Phil Hoffman Travel (Crystal award accepted by Phil Hoffman), Travel Concept's Cruise Centre (Seabourn award accepted by David Brandon) and St Ives Travel (Regent award accepted by Adelina Arancibia).

APT river cruise earlybirds

COINCIDING with the launch of its 2013 European River Cruising brochure, APT has announced a series of earlybird deals for voyages next year, including a Fly Free deal on cat E and D suites (year-round), and all suites on cruises departing during Mar, Nov and Dec.

In addition, the cruise line is offering Fly Free just pay taxes on cat A, B and C balcony suites.

The deals are valid for bookings made by 30 Sep 2012, or until sold out.

Meanwhile, the cruise line also announced that it will split cruise deposits, with \$1,000 to be paid within seven days of booking and the remaining \$2,000 not due until 30 Sep 2012.

See www.aptrgroup.travel.

New cruise swells in Shellharbour

SHELLHARBOUR experienced its first-ever Cruise Expo last week, with the Southern NSW community enjoying an influx of cruise line representatives ready and raring to answer their burning cruising questions.

The brainchild of Travelscene Shellharbour, the Expo was held at the Warilla Bowling Club and welcomed more than 250 would-be cruisers.

Holding court at the event was Cunard, Princess Cruises, P&O Cruises, Seabourn, Royal Caribbean, Azamara Club Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Captain Cook Cruises, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, Hurtigruten and Oceania Cruises.

Amongst the day's festivities, attendees were given the chance to win a variety of Captain Cook Cruises and P&O voyages, as well as a swag of other goodies such as towels.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly**, a spokesperson from Travelscene Shellharbour said that the day was a huge success, and that the team has had a very busy week this week dealing with a mass of cruise bookings inspired by the Expo.

Pictured above enjoying the Expo festivities is (from left) Vanessa Burchell, Travelscene Shellharbour Consultant; Lisa McDonald, Owner/Manager Travelscene Shellharbour; Lance Dye, Complete Cruise Solution BPM; and Sam O'Malley, Travelscene Shellharbour Consultant.



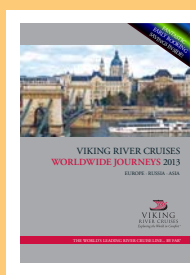
Brochure Spotlight

Viking River Cruises' new Worldwide Journeys 2013 brochure features eight new itineraries for next year, including a 21-day European Odyssey.

The fourth consecutive brochure from Viking for Australian and New Zealand travellers, the 2013 Worldwide Journeys program also includes a new 18 day Imperial Cities of Europe cruise and 23 day European Sojourn.

The brochure also features Earlybird savings of up to \$2,660 per couple for bookings made by 31 July 2012.

For more details visit www.vikingrivercruises.com.au.



APT: La Chaine des Rotisseurs

ONE of the world's most prestigious culinary organisations, La Chaine des Rotisseurs, has inducted APT into its ranks, for its European river cruise offering.

The honour means that all 10 APT-AmaWaterways co-owned Europe riverships on the water this year are members of the Chaine des Rotisseurs.

"This really lifts the image of river cruise dining, and we're proud to maintain our leadership role in developing the standards for this type of holiday," said APT's General Manager Marketing, Debra Fox.

Membership to La Chaine des Rotisseurs is invitation only, and its ranks include professional chefs, restaurateurs and hoteliers around the world.

So far APT-AmaWaterways co-owned riverships are the only vessels on the water this year that are members of the Chaine des Rotisseurs.

American Cruise & rail

CRUISERS may be interested to learn that Rocky Mountaineer is launching a new Coastal Passage route out of Seattle in Aug 2013, meaning that those who are departing Seattle for Alaska voyages will be able to do a pre- or post-cruise Western Canada rail trip, see agent.rockymountaineer.com for details.

Jayavarman savings

GUESTS who book Travel Indochina's 15 Jun 2012 10-day Mekong River Cruise package will save up to \$2,800 per couple.

Priced from \$2,845pp/ts from Melbourne and \$2,865pp/ts ex Sydney, the package includes: return airfares, one night's accom in Saigon, an eight-day Jayavarman cruise, one night's accom in Siem Reap, all onboard meals, all tours and entrance fees during the cruise, English speaking guide, and transfers, tips and taxes.

See www.ticconnect.com.au.

Sail to South America with HAL

HOLLAND America Line will feature 13 South American itineraries onboard three ships during the upcoming spring 2012-13 season.

Together, *ms Veendam*, *ms Maasdam* and *ms Prinsendam*, will feature 20 South American departures, calling at a combined 54 ports, with itineraries ranging from 13- to 68-days.

Veendam will kick-off her South American season in Nov 2012 with a series of six 13-day and one 17-day itineraries between Valparaiso, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, as well as a 14- or 18-day cruise departing Boston or Ft Lauderdale, to Valparaiso; and a 18- or 21-day cruise from Valparaiso to Ft Lauderdale or Boston.

Meanwhile *Maasdam* will sail a 49-day Amazon and Carnival Explorer Voyage from Ft Lauderdale on 18 Jan 2013, and *Prinsendam* will host a 68-day Grand South America and Antarctica Voyage roundtrip from Ft Lauderdale, both of which can be broken up into shorter segment cruises.

See www.hollandamerica.com.au.

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