



CDU conference 'critically important'

A new venue in Hobart and international speakers will underscore the industry's most important conference to date.

AS AUSTRALIA'S largest cruise season approaches, Cruise Down Under is pulling out the big guns for its annual conference in Aug.

Four international speakers have been announced, and the venue is one of the hottest new tourism attractions in the country: Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA).

"It is critically important that all stakeholders understand the volume and demand that this coming season presents," CDU chairman Chris White, told *Cruise Weekly*.

"This is the only industry-based event specifically tailored to the cruise industry in Australia and it provides delegates the opportunity to learn about the global cruise industry, where Australia fits in the big picture, what the cruise lines are planning in the coming seasons, and how to be part of the fastest growing tourism sector in our region."

Key speakers include Christopher Allen, associate vp Global Deployment and Itinerary Planning, Royal Caribbean International & Celebrity Cruises; Captain Nikolaos Antalis, port captain RCI & Azamara Club; Shirley Henderson, manager Shore Excursions for Carnival UK; and Jennifer Vandekreeke, director Australia, Carnival Cruise Lines.

With a conference theme of "Connecting experiences – from ship to shore", much discussion will focus on the link between onboard and shore experiences, the development of itineraries, infrastructure and

economic benefits.

"We will also be discussing how destinations and tourism businesses need to tailor shore excursion product to the various brands of cruise lines," White said.

A range of plenary sessions, workshops, industry functions and a gala dinner are also planned for the three-day event.

The 2012 CDU Conference will be held on 29-31 Aug at MONA, Hobart.

Registrations are now open to both members and non-members of CDU at www.cruisedownunder.com.

Orion's biggest prize ever

AGENTS who make a booking for Orion's 2012 Kimberley Expeditions have the chance to win "the ultimate white Christmas experience" - an 18-night Mawson's Antarctica Orion expedition.

Valued at over \$80,000 the prize is the biggest ever offered by the cruise line, and includes accommodation for two in an Owners Suite onboard the five-star *Orion*.

"There is a sense of Australian exploration history in walking in the footsteps of Douglas Mawson and his companions, standing in their rough huts left exactly as they were when the explorers departed a century ago," said Orion's managing director, Sarina Bratton

"This is a world only a privileged few will ever experience, and I am sure it will appeal to those in the travel industry," she added.

Each booking will score agents an entry into the draw.

See www.orionexpeditions.com/kimberley_promotion.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

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

Win yourself a Princess cruise

PRINCESS Cruises has kicked off its Discover the World of Princess Cruises campaign, with the first of five emails featuring interesting facts about the cruise line and its offerings already having proved popular with agents.

The promotion allows agents who read the emails and answer a couple of quick questions to then enter a fortnightly draw to win a 1 of 20 *50 Essential Experiences* travel books.

Answering the questions also gives agents a place in the draw to win a two-night coastal cruise in a mini-suite.

So far hundreds of agents have already submitted answers to the first email.

The second email (on Alaska) is available to view now at www.myccs.com.au.

The promotion runs until 30 Jun 2012.

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Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

Got a thirst for knowledge?

Just imagine if you could have one training session that provided a compilation of the best cruise product in one hit.

One session that could help you understand the unique selling points of many different brands, delivering you what you need to better qualify your clients.

Well that course is now available for all members of the International Cruise Council and will be presented at a capital city close to your office in the near future – starting with Sydney next week!

Naturally one three hour session doesn't make you an instant expert but for those who have had a taste of ICCA training in the past now is a great time for a refresher.

For consultants that have not completed any of our cruise training you are potentially missing out on some great business selling cruise as a priority from your office.

The ICCA Fleet Review module (in conjunction with our NEW Cruise Sales & Service" module) is a necessary part of every travel consultants armour so register for your place at our next course now.

Go to www.cruising.org.au and click on the Training Academy tab at the top of the page.

We are heading toward generating one million cruise passengers from the Australia/New Zealand market and yet still only 2.7% of Australians and 1.3% of New Zealanders took a cruise in 2011.

Where are the rest of the population going for their holiday?

There are still plenty out there that have yet to experience a cruise!

"Education is like a shower – you need to take one regularly" (Scott Koepf, ICCA Masters Facilitator).

Sherry emphasises economic benefits

Carnival Australia CEO Ann Sherry has addressed the beneficial flow-on effect of cruising at a major economic conference.

THE value of Australia's cruise industry was a hot topic at this week's joint conference held by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) and the Queensland Economic Development Forum (QEDF).

Speaking at the event, Ann Sherry told delegates that cruising's double-digit annual growth over successive years had delivered a positive "multiplier effect" to other parts of the tourism sector as well as the wider economy.

However, she also warned that "gaps" in port facilities at Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns remained the biggest threat to the continued growth of the industry's economic contribution.

"It is quite clear that cruising's success translates into a wider tourism and retail success," Sherry said.

"You only have to study the consumer behaviour of cruise passengers to know that cruising contributes to tourism in a positive way," she added.

Sherry pointed to passengers' pre-cruise spending at local hotels, restaurants, taxis, visitor attractions and tours.

"When they return home, they're again just as likely to stay on as part of their extended

holiday," she said.

In her speech, Sherry also emphasised the importance of social media and word-of-mouth.

"Our P&O Cruises' Facebook site, with its more than 80,000 fans, regularly has passengers asking other fans for the names of hotels and restaurants," she said.

While confirming that some Australian ports lacked adequate facilities, Sherry assured delegates that Carnival would continue to work with governments and local authorities with a view to improving port infrastructure.

According to a Deloitte Access Economics study commissioned by Carnival Australia, cruising contributed nearly \$830 million to the national economy in 2010-2011.

This value added contribution represented a 44% increase on the cruise industry's \$580 million contribution in 2007-2008.

Win a mini bar-catered event

AGENTS are being offered the opportunity to win a fully stocked mini bar as well as an all-inclusive catered event at their store, courtesy of Scenic Tours.

Unveiled in celebration of the launch of Scenic's 2013 Europe River Cruising program, the incentive will see Scenic bring its all-inclusive luxury experience to the winner's office with an event which will include canapés and cocktails made by a private bartender and served by a private butler.

To be in the running agents need to simply answer five questions on Scenic Tours Europe River Cruising.

To enter, and for further information on the promotion visit www.scenictours.com.au/minibar-promo.



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APT is Head of the River

APT is claiming the status "head of the river" in the Australian and New Zealand market after it was revealed that the company's 2010-11 river cruise market growth was 36%, compared to the overall river cruise market growth as reported in the latest International Cruise Council Australasia (ICCA) report of 22%.

"This above average growth rate has given us over 40% of the market here, which we're thrilled about," said APT chief executive officer, Chris Hall.

"It also means we are the largest operator, with the remaining market being shared by the other five ICCA River Cruise Line members here," he added.

Hall went on to say that whilst the company is proud of the figures, APT acknowledges that there is "healthy competition in this sector" and that they do not take the honour for granted.

"Ultimately, the customer is benefiting from all this innovation but along the way the many river cruise operators have created a new and very sophisticated and professionally managed industry that has generated new and return business for travel agents," Hall said.

Hall went further and thanked the company's trade partners, saying that the results had come from their support.

"They know what to expect from onboard delivery, agents trust the APT experience, and while we thank them we guarantee that we will continue to deliver what we promise," Hall said.

Captain Cook's new rockets

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises has unveiled its stand-out new look fleet of rockets, which are each wrapped in bright red vinyl and feature distinct Hop On Hop Off Sydney Harbour Explorer branding down the sides.

The choice of colour, according to the cruise line, is designed to ensure that the rockets not only look fun, but so that they can also easily be identified as the 'Hop on Hop Off Sydney Harbour Explorer' service vessels.

"We want people to see them and immediately know they are the vessels that operate our Hop on Hop Off Sydney Harbour Explorer service," said Anthony Haworth, gm, Captain Cook Cruises.

"Wrapping them in red seemed a great way to achieve this," he added.

In terms of the Hop on Hop Off Sydney Harbour Explorer cruise itself, the service allows pax to hop from one Sydney Harbour attraction to another (incl Circular Quay, Taronga Zoo etc..) with a 24-hour pass.

See www.captaincook.com.au.

Students get set for cruising

THE students of Australia's first cruise qualification, Diploma Tourism (Cruise Operations) have thanked industry partners including Cunard, P&O Cruises, Princess Cruises, Oceania and APT River Cruising for passing on their product knowledge.

The course, which launched this year, is currently nearing the end of its first semester, and consists of tourism, hospitality and events content, plus a dedicated day per week of cruise contextualisation.

Later this month the class (pictured below) is heading off on their first experience of cruising onboard *Pacific Pearl*, whilst later in the year they will also have the opportunity to complete a first aid, fire safety and basic sea survival course.

"The course has been developed after recognising a demand for individuals who want to take advantage of the massive growth and opportunities in cruising," said lecturer and ex-Princess Cruises hotel officer Jonathan Sharp.



P&O invites stylish celebrations

CRUISERS seeking to celebrate special occasions can now take advantage of four packages introduced by P&O Cruises.

Available to holidaymakers cruising for five days or more, the packages provide a series of extra inclusions, and are priced from \$159.

The packages include: 'Special Occasions', which provides guests with a bottle of Moët, dinner at Salt Grill for two people, Ernest Hillier chocolates, and \$50 onboard credit; and 'Romance' which includes a bottle of Moët, dinner at Salt Grill for two people, Ernest Hillier chocolates, a dozen roses, a teddy bear, and a framed portrait photo from the cruise.

The final two packages include: 'Foodies' which gives guests dinner at Salt Grill for two, the P&O Cruises cookbook *Holidays*, a bottle of Trout Valley Pinot Noir and Glandore Estate Chardonnay, and \$50 onboard credit; and 'Double the Fun' (for groups of four to share) which provides cruisers with dinner at Salt Grill for four people, a bottle of Tyrell's Old Winery Rose and Dusky Sounds Sauvignon Blanc and \$100 casino credit.

For details see www.MyCCS.com.au.

Wind Star renovation complete

THE renovation of Windstar Cruises' 148-guest *Wind Star* is complete, with the cruise line confirming that the four-masted sailing yacht is now under sail.

The first of Windstar's three sailing yachts to complete what will be an \$18 million full renovation of the fleet, *Wind Star's* renovation included the laying of new teak decking and the installation of new white canvas sails.

The vessel's furnishings and fittings also enjoyed a makeover from headboards to handrails, and the ship now features a soft seascape colour palette.

Meanwhile *Wind Spirit* and *Wind Surf* have also enjoyed corridor and stateroom renovations, and are now both scheduled to be fully renovated in Dec.

For more info call TTW on 1300 950 622.


West African cruise deals

G ADVENTURES is offering discounts of up to 25% off itineraries included in its 2013 West Africa cruise/tour program.

The deal will see guests who book G Adventures' 27-day Cape Town to Dakar cruise/tour (departing in Apr 2013) receive a 25% discount, which will bring the fare to \$12,372, whilst guests who book sectors from Cape Town to Accra or Accra to Dakar receive a 20% discount, which brings the fares to \$9,196 and \$5,596 respectively.

The deals are available on bookings made before 30 June 2012.

Visit www.gadventures.com for more details.



DANCE across the Caribbean.

Holidaymakers looking for a bit of soft-shoe-shuffling on vacation will be thrilled to learn of a Dancing Buddy cruise onboard *Freedom of the Seas* which invites participants to Dance Across the Caribbean.

The party gets started on 17 Mar 2013, and invites ballroom dancers from across the world to swoon across the ocean, enjoying two private dance parties, a Dance Buddy t-shirt and evenings filled with dance and elegance.

APT launches smart website

THE needs and wants of consumers has driven APT to launch a revamped "smart" website, which provides more detailed information about APT's tours, cruises, destinations and travel styles.

Featuring around 1,200 itineraries, supported by maps, images, video, virtual tours, day-to-day schedules, accommodation, dining options and cruise ship deck and suite plan, the new site features rich and immersive photo and video galleries and virtual tours.

The website design was based on extensive consumer research and testing, and according to APT "continues to be an excellent resource for retail travel agents".

Speaking about the launch, APT gm Sales and Marketing, Debra Fox, said "our customers are our focus with this website".

"We conducted extensive research and user testing to find out how our consumers are using the digital space, and what they wanted from travel websites," she said.

"Our new website is a result of the unique insights they shared with us, and allows us to build on an already strong digital online presence to deliver an informative and superior personalised experience," she added.

Key features of the revamped site include easy-to-find info on tours, destinations and travel styles; up-to-date tour and cruise itineraries, showing travel dates, prices and real time availability.

The website also allows users to order or download brochures, or view ebrochures online; as well as to view photo galleries and travel footage; watch virtual tours of river ships in Europe and Asia.

See www.APTouring.com.au.

Get involved with RCCL

ROYAL Caribbean has posted another "insiders" video which gives viewers an insight into the cruise line's philanthropic activities.

Titled 'Get Involved, Volunteer Everywhere: Royal Caribbean G.I.V.E's Back to Communities', the video can be viewed by **CLICKING HERE**.

Sample cruises like a celebrity

THIS upcoming summer season Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises are hoping to lure more Australian cruises with their respective one-night sampler cruises onboard *Voyager of the Seas* and *Celebrity Solstice*.

"Less than 3% of the population went cruising last year and they know what's behind the gleaming white paint of a cruise ship's hull – but for the majority of Australians who see more and more cruise ships arrive in harbours around the country, they remain a huge curiosity," said Adam Armstrong, commercial manager, Royal Caribbean Cruises Australia.

"What happens onboard? What do the public rooms look like? How big are the cabins? One-night sampler cruises are our answer to these questions," he added.

The one night samplers are priced from \$345pp (*Voyager's* 23 Nov sailing) and \$355pp (*Solstice's* 09 Dec one night sampler).

NCL fitness expansion

NCL has expanded its fitness program onboard its fleet of Freestyle Cruising vessels with group exercise TRX Suspension Classes held four times a week on seven-night sailings (US\$20 per class or US\$60 for all four).

HAL's Environmental award

HOLLAND America Line has been awarded a gold 2012 Rear Admiral William M. Benkert Environmental Protection Award by the US Coast Guard for the line's environmental leadership and for successfully achieving several environmental objectives established by the company that exceed standard regulation.

"At Holland America Line we recognise that environmental stewardship is a daily responsibility, and we are continually seeking ways to enhance and extend our initiatives," said Stein Kruse, president of HAL.

Aussie agents blown away by Scenic Egypt

EIGHTEEN excited Australian travel agents descended onto Egypt to partake in a spectacular 14-day Scenic Tours famill.

Once in the ancient land of the pharaohs, the Aussies cruised the serene waters of Lake Nasser in Upper Egypt from Abu Simbel to Aswan, onboard the *MV African Dreams*.

On land the group were spoiled at the Kempinski Resort at Soma Bay on the Red Sea coast of Egypt, and enjoyed a charter flight to Abu Simble to visit the temple almost entirely on their own.

The group were also surprised by the team at Scenic with a special balloon ride at Luxor.

According to Scenic, the agents' response to the overall Egyptian experience was 'extremely positive', with most saying they were "blown away" by the "hospitality shown throughout".

Members of the privileged group are pictured above (from left) on the luxury Nile River Cruise ship, *Sun Ray* as they prepare for the Galabeya Party onboard: Hayley Lyson, HWT, Scone, NSW; Bridget Le Maitre, HWT, Leopold, VIC; Teisha Woolnough, Scenic Tours, NSW; Kimberley Hall, HWT, Belconnen, ACT; Karen Spencer, Go Tours Travel Eleebana, NSW; Saffron Russell, Travelworld, Alice Springs; Kelli Williamson, HWT, Mount Hutton, NSW; and Christine Gunning, Capital Travel Manuka, ACT.



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