



Carnival to spend \$700m on 101 ships

Carnival Cruise Lines has announced a US\$300 million “enhancement program” on top of its parent company’s fleet-wide operational review.

AFTER the recent series of problems involving several of its ships, CCL has embarked on a program to overhaul its operations and backup systems.

The upgrades will boost emergency power capabilities and fire safety technology, as well as improve the level of operating redundancies across the troubled brand’s 24 vessels.

CCL plans to install additional emergency generators and reinforce shipboard systems to prevent a loss of power, as happened on *Carnival Triumph* in Feb this year.

The program will also expand hotel services for passengers’ comfort in case of any future losses of main power.

Parent company Carnival Corporation previously announced a corporate-wide operational review of its 10 brands, which led to today’s decision to upgrade the entire fleet.

The overall program of enhancements across the company’s 101 ships, including its other nine other brands, is expected to cost between US\$600 and \$700 million.

“All of Carnival Cruise Lines’ ships operate safely today,” Gerry Cahill, CCL’s president said.

“However, by applying lessons learned through our fleet-wide operational review after the *Carnival Triumph* fire and by taking advantage of new technologies, we have identified areas for enhancement across our operations.”

The increase in emergency generator power will be completed over the next few months.

An additional emergency generator will be installed on each vessel to provide for all toilets, fresh water and elevators in the event of a loss of main power.

Work is already underway and not expected to affect scheduled itineraries, CCL said.

In the next phase, the line will install a second back-up system on each ship, plus expanded cooking facilities, cold food storage and communications systems.

Fire prevention and suppression will also be bolstered with the latest high-pressure water mist system.

The company’s operational review has also identified modifications to further decrease the likelihood of losing propulsion or primary power, including a reconfiguration of engine-related electrical components.

Quantum to be revolutionary

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises Ltd has unveiled the first of its two new vessels, *Quantum of the Seas*, complete with a significant number of innovations and amazing enhancements.

For full coverage, see **page 4** of today’s **CW**.

Sell five and cruise for free

SMALL-SHIP and yacht cruising firm Variety Cruises has launched a new incentive for travel agents in Australia, offering a free cabin on a Seychelles or Mediterranean cruise as rewards for top sellers in the 2013 Northern Summer.

Entitled “Sell 5 and Cruise for Free”, the promo requires agents to ticket five cruise bookings on five of Variety’s 8-day itineraries in the Seychelles and Mediterranean in exchange for a free cabin on a voyage of your own from the same range.

The eligible cruises, both for selling and for redeeming are the Garden of Eden, Romantic Riviera, Treasures of South Italy & Malta, Adriatic Odyssey and Dodecanese Mosaic, all offering scheduled departures between Jun and Oct 2013.

Agents successful in earning a cabin for a voyage of their choice have until the end of 2014 to redeem their reward.

The incentive is being run in Australia by Variety Cruises’ local representative Discover The World Cruising, with full details on the incentive available by phoning 1800 623 267 or emailing retailres@discovertheworld.com.au.

Rhapsody offloads rowdy pax

A 29-YEAR old Australian passenger was disembarked from *Rhapsody of the Seas* in New Caledonia after repeatedly violating Royal Caribbean’s Guest Conduct Policy.

According to Cruise Critic, the passenger reportedly threw two metal poles used for holding up queuing ropes overboard and tried unsuccessfully to throw a chair overboard.

All the news that floats!

Today’s trade issue of **CW** features five pages of all the latest cruise information.



We are proud to introduce two of our shining stars and 2013 AFTA NTIA nominees

Cherie Bowman
Best Sales Executive -
Industry supplier

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Congratulations and good luck!



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Windstar sells Tahiti to Aus market

The expanded Windstar Cruises is confident about its 2014 Society Island itineraries and future voyages in Asia and Australia.

TRAVEL the World, the local representative of Windstar Cruises for the past 25 years, unveiled details of next year's program at a function in Sydney yesterday, but focused almost completely on Tahiti.

Windstar, which doubled the size of its fleet after purchasing three Seabourn ships in Feb, recently announced it would return to Papeete next year (CW 31 Jan).

Michelle Taylor, TTW's executive manager of sales and marketing also confirmed that a ship would be deployed to Asia and "will almost definitely make it to Australia".

But for now, the company is keen to promote the value of its seven-night Tahiti cruises, priced from AU\$3014ppts, featuring four overnight stays including Bora Bora.

"It's a very economical way to experience Tahiti," said Taylor.

The luxury line has controlled pricing through resistance to an all-inclusive model, she said, "because some guests want it, some don't."

Taylor suggested the Australian market "might want to buy the drinks package".

Windstar's "very relaxed, casual" style of

cruising was suited to local clients, she said.

Now open for sale, the 'Dreams of Tahiti' voyages aboard the renovated 148-pax Wind Spirit are scheduled to depart weekly from May through Nov 2014, visiting Moorea, Tahaa, Raiatea and Huahine, with 1.5 days in Bora Bora before sailing back to Papeete.

Fares include complimentary water sports from the onboard platform, complimentary in-room dining, as well as all meals and pre-dinner canapés.

TTW is also currently offering exclusive discounted fares on Windstar's last-minute 2013 Europe cruises.

For bookings, call 1300 950 622 or go online at www.traveltheworld.com.au.

White Bay "good neighbours"

CARNIVAL Australia has introduced "neighbour-friendly" practices to minimise disruption to residents living near Sydney's new White Bay terminal.

The promises include considerate use of the ship's whistle, external lighting, music and announcement system.

The company has also reassured locals there will be no "surprise visits", with shipping schedules published up to two years ahead on the Sydney Ports website, and no "planned" late-night arrivals.

P&O's svp Tammy Marshall said the launch of White Bay operations highlighted the priority of improving cruise ship access east of the Harbour Bridge to support the growth of the Australian cruise industry.

Aussie agents enjoy Scenic Jewel debut

CRUISE Weekly spotted this group of erstwhile Australian travel agents propping up the bar aboard the new *Scenic Jewel* which is currently on her inaugural voyage in Europe.

Mary Kent, Travel Advantage Castle Hill NSW; Kwong Chan, HWT Greensborough Vic; and Alison Harding, Travelscene Belrose NSW are pictured with Craig Farrell from Scenic Tours in Vic.

Many more photos on our website and at facebook.com/traveldaily.



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Record webinar attendances

MORE than 250 agents across Australia tuned in to P&O Cruises' two webinar sessions held last week to introduce and offer further detail on its 2014-15 cruising season.

Highlights of the program included sailings from all Australian mainland cities and new itineraries visiting a raft of new ports.

Sales for the season opened last Friday, with P&O senior vice president Tammy Marshall saying "Our program offers sailing from five capital cities for the first time as well as some great new itineraries, so there's lots of exciting news for agents to share with their customers".



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Cruise News & Views...

Spotlight on Aqua Expeditions

AQUA Expeditions joined us at CLIA Australasia recently, so what do they have to offer as a niche river cruise operator?

Aqua Expeditions have become a recognised leader in luxury, small-ship cruising on the world's greatest rivers.

In 2007, the company brought the first luxury cruise line to the Amazon River in Peru with the *M/V Aqua* (24 guests + crew), an architecturally designed, custom-built vessel offering travellers the comfort & sophistication of 5-star, boutique hotel accommodations, gourmet cuisine and privately guided shore excursions.

In 2009, Aqua Expeditions expanded, with the launch of the *M/V Aria* (32 guests + crew).

Departing from Iquitos, Peru, *M/V Aqua* and *M/V Aria* cruises include guided, educational excursions into the Amazon's rainforest and ecosystems and take passengers to see the fascinating wildlife of the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, from exotic species of birds to the Amazon's famed pink dolphins.

Capitalising on the growing interest in small-ship cruising, in 2014, Aqua Expeditions will launch the *M/V Aqua Mekong* (20 guests + crew), cruising the historic Mekong River in Cambodia and Vietnam between Siem Reap and Phnom Penh.

With floor to ceiling windows, the *M/V Aqua Mekong* will enable travellers to enjoy unparalleled views of Vietnam and Cambodia's cultural sites from the comfort of their luxury suite.

Guided shore excursions will include educational visits to popular attractions in both Vietnam and Cambodia including Tonle Sap Lake, Phnom Penh, Chau Doc and more.

See www.aquaexpeditions.com for more information on Aqua Expeditions.

First White Bay passengers

UPON the arrival of P&O's first cruise ship to its new terminal at White Bay, Carnival Australia senior vice president Tammy Marshall and Lachlan Benson from Sydney Ports were on hand to greet Loren Beder and Moshe Belleli - the first passengers off *Pacific Pearl* after they passed through immigration.

P&O parent firm Carnival Australia has pledged to ensure the terminal transition is seamless.

"We have worked to make the change as smooth as possible for our passengers including direct communication advising them of the new arrangements," Marshall said.

"We also want the local community to know of our intention to be a good neighbour," she added.

She's pictured above left with Lachlan Benson and the two disembarking passengers.



Cruise ship accessibility site

A NEW web portal outlining the accessibility of cruise ships for handicapped cruisers has been launched by American disabled access company Special Needs Group.

The site offers information on wheelchair and scooter access restrictions to parts of many cruise ships.

Norwegian Cruise Lines is serving as the launch partner for the new portal, with more liners operating in North American waters progressively adding their details to the site.

New loyalty level for Princess

PRINCESS Cruises has rolled out a new Medallion benefit level to its Captains Choice loyalty program, with the new level fitting between the current Gold & Platinum levels.

Repeat passengers travelling on their fourth or fifth Princess Cruises voyage or on sailings of between 31-50 days can attain the new level and gain access to enhanced benefits from the Gold level, such as free upgrade to a higher insurance level and discounted souvenir DVD's.

Membership cards and pins for the new tier will be burgundy in colour.

Two new land & sea packages

COMBINATION themed "Signature Sailings" land and sea itineraries have been released for sale by Windstar Cruises.

The voyages, entitled "Tastes & Traditions of the Mediterranean" and "Enchanting Castles & Gardens," offer exclusive access to hotel nights before and after the sailing as well as tours of private castles and gardens while onshore.



RESERVATIONS CONSULTANT

Silversea owns and operates a fleet of seven 'boutique' cruise ships and is recognised as the market leader in the ultra-luxury sector.

A position is available for a Reservations Consultant based in their Sydney CBD office.

Reporting to the Passenger Services Manager, this role requires you to process new and existing reservations, generate accurate invoices, assist with group reservations, assist with documentation and provide exceptional customer service.

To apply for this role you must have previous reservations experience with the use of GDS systems plus strong customer service skills.

Confidential applications to Philippa Baker on 02 9506 7000 or email Philippa@alexander-associates.com.au

“Groundbreaking” Quantum unveiled

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises Ltd yesterday set the bar for modern-day ocean-going with the unveiling of numerous revolutionary designs and enhancements to make their debut onboard *Quantum Of The Seas*, the company's newest ship to launch at the end of next year and first in its new Quantum-Class variety.

Described by RCCL as “firsts at sea”, the products, services, attractions and entertainment options available on *Quantum* effectively see the template for a cruise ship thrown out of the window.

The company's newest ship model was unveiled by *Quantum* Godmother, actress and Broadway star Kristen Chenoweth, with other celebrities also making appearances via video.

Undoubtedly the most eye-catching feature to be in operation on *Quantum* is “North Star”, essentially an orb similar to a London Eye-style capsule in which passengers may soar 300-feet above the ship while it is in motion to literally obtain a “birds eye view”.



RipCord by iFly - the first skydiving experience at sea will also form part of the ship, allowing passengers to experience the sensation of skydiving from inside a safe enclosure.

Internally, *Quantum* will boast a multi-level entertainment venue - Two70 - spanning three decks with floor-to-ceiling glass walls aimed at providing a living-room style retreat for passengers to kick back their heels and relax.

SeaPlex will be the “largest indoor active space at sea” according to Royal Caribbean, and will allow guests to try out their circus skills on the flying trapeze, or engage fellow passengers in a game of basketball on the full-size court.

Kids have been spoiled for choice also with a dodgem car track, which featured US IndyCar star and three-time Indianapolis 500 winner Helio Castroneves zooming around in the cars.

The dodgem facility also converts into a roller skating rink and doubles as a dancefloor for the DJ spinning tunes from a hovering booth above for passengers to boogie the nights away.

At the end of it all however, everyone must eventually sleep, and Royal Caribbean has not forgotten about this, unveiling staterooms approximately 9% larger than Oasis class ships.

Eliminating the potential for customers to complain about the view, virtual balconies will be added to interior rooms, consisting of an 80-inch LCD projection screen broadcasting a high-definition image of what is going on outside the ship, whether that is the ocean or the scene from the port currently being visited.

The Virtual Balcony concept will also be rolled out to sister-ship *Navigator of the Seas* when it enters drydock for a revitalisation project in Jan next year.

Families are also catered for, with new Family-Connected staterooms allowing interconnectivity among three different room categories which still offers separate bedrooms and bathrooms for all family members.

“Innovation has always been part of our DNA and we have taken advantage of all that creativity to design Quantum cruising,” Royal Caribbean Cruises chairman and ceo Richard Fain said.

Quantum of the Seas will cater to 4,100 passengers and is currently under construction, with a launch date of Nov 2014 currently scheduled.

View Royal Caribbean's launch video, starring Kristen Chenoweth by [CLICKING HERE](#).

For a special video highlighting *Quantum's* many innovations, [CLICK HERE](#).



Lindblad Geographic revamp

THE existing partnership between Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic will be enhanced and increased, according to an email blast sent to subscribers of the company's newsletter by chief operating officer Joel Katz.

Orion will be renamed early next year to the *National Geographic Orion*, incorporating the company as part of “a seamless, integrated operation ashore and afloat”.

Lindblad will also increase the number of expedition crew onboard, adding divemasters, undersea specialists and scuba diving equipment, along with a National Geographic photographer and video chronicler.

“We believe this added focus on the expedition component (with the flexibility to be involved at a level you feel comfortable with) will enhance the operation that you have previously enjoyed, while the standards of accommodation, service and cuisine will remain at the current high levels you have come to expect,” Sven Lindblad commented.

Pathways Savings discounts have been increased from 5% to 10% on 2014 voyages, with savings also valid on all Lindblad - National Geographic vessels, while combination voyage discounts have also been increased by the same amount.

Dedicated sole occupancy cabins will also be introduced due to popular demand.



WINDSTAR Cruises is very excited about its purchase of three vessels from Seabourn (*CW* 19 Feb), with the expansion doubling the size of its fleet.

At a Windstar function in Sydney yesterday, Michelle Taylor from Travel The World told *CW* the acquisition of the three 104 all-suite ships *Seabourn Pride*, *Seabourn Legend* and *Seabourn Spirit* is set to significantly extend the Windstar offering.

The *Seabourn Pride* will be the first to enter service with Windstar, with the move scheduled for this time next year.

However, before joining the fleet, the Seabourn ships will undergo a “Windstar branded renovation” - which Taylor said basically involved removing the signature Seabourn “S” which adorns just about every item on the vessels.



Face to Face: Debra Fox General Manager Marketing: APT

Welcome to Face to Face, where we chat to cruise industry leaders.

What is the key to your success?

We love and listen to our customers. Our philosophy is to delight them continually and with a 98 percent customer satisfaction rating, we think this strategy is working for us. They are at the heart of all decisions.

What is your favourite destination, and why?

I love Vietnam and the Mekong – the people, the culture, the way it plays with your senses. In fact, love it so much I'm taking the whole family there to celebrate my special milestone birthday!

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

We took a detour to a school in an impoverished area near Siem Reap built by APT, in conjunction with ODA orphanage and The Rotary Club of Atherton. It was an amazing and incredibly humbling to see the positive impact it is having on lives of so many local children.

What is the next "Hot Spot" in cruising destinations?

Rather than specific destinations, demand is up for cruises that take the travellers off the beaten track. At the moment our expedition cruises are popular, offering passengers the chance to travel in luxury but enjoy experiences as diverse as seeing wild orangutans; meeting remote Papuan tribes; and learning the secrets of ancient Mayan civilisations.

What do you think is the most underrated aspect of cruising?

It's the little things, the details. They make all the difference to customer – stress free. Customer feedback that it's your waiter knowing on the first day what your favourite drink is with dinner, the fact that they only have to unpack once and decent headphones on walking tours are just as important as the journey itself.

How can cruising continue to grow in the current financial climate?

To quote our founder and owner, Geoff McGeary, as life spans increase, the 'once in a lifetime trip' has become 'a many-in-a-lifetime trip'. Consequently, we always take the opportunity to educate our customers on the great value & quality that cruising offers over other choices.

What is something you wish more agents / consumers knew about cruising?

Critical to transforming a cruise from a good holiday into an amazing experience are the staff that tend to your needs. Our staff are a real point of difference. They are knowledgeable experts; many are local to the region; and they are on hand around the clock to tend to our customers' every need.

What advice would you give others who would like a job like yours?

I've always followed the mantra that in order to be good at what you do, you need to work hard, love your job, listen to your colleagues at all levels but most of all, put your customers first.



Debra's Cruise Favourites!

Favourite Ship: Amalotus

Favourite ship activity: Butler Service

Favourite shore excursion: Taking in Angkor Wat at sunrise with a glass of champagne

Favourite region: South America - it's so vibrant and the wine is incredible!

Favourite port: Tournon and Budapest

Favourite onboard food/drink: Luke Nguyen's personally designed banquet

Favourite perk of the job: Experiencing all of the above!

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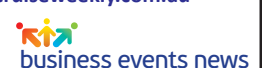
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