

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 12 February 2013

## WA to have a new ship by December

Cruise & Maritime Voyages plans to base the *Astor* in Fremantle for at least three seasons.

THREE months after Western Australian lost its only ship, *Athena*, another cruise line has stepped in to fill the gap.

The 620-passenger *Astor* is scheduled to arrive in Fremantle on 11 December 2013 and offer 15 cruises through to the end of March 2014.

It will then return for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 summers.

Itineraries are set to include many Asian cities as well as local ports such as Albany, Esperance, Bunbury, Broome, Kangaroo Island, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Port Arthur and Eden.

International destinations include Bali, Lombok, Komodo Island, Singapore, Port Klang (Kuala Lumpur), Langkawi, Phuket, Phi Phi Island and Penang.

Passengers will also be allowed to board in various ports around Australia - not just the homeport in Perth.

"*Astor* is an absolutely beautiful ship, which will take Fremantle homeporting into a totally different stratosphere," Vilma Rovedatti, the company's sales and marketing manager, told *CW*.

"We have very different itineraries and we go to ports that other bigger ships can't get into."

According to Rovedatti, Australians can be assured that the ship is here to stay.

"Cruise & Maritime Voyages has been operating in the UK for a number of years - we are very well established and this decision was not taken lightly.

"We have done careful research and committed to three seasons, and we already have support from key industry personnel and agents."

The *Astor* was supposed to spend the upcoming four-month period in Europe but CMV "jumped into the Australasian market" when they saw the opportunity created by the withdrawal of Classic International Cruises' *Athena*, Rovedatti said.

The mid-size 20,606-tonne ship, which was built in 1987 and underwent an \$18m refurb in 2010, has a wide choice of cabins, two swimming pools, four restaurants, five lounges, a sports deck and golf driving range.

For a limited period, CMV Australia is offering early booking deals for the inaugural season.

Saver Fares offer discounts of up to 25% on full published fares, applicable to a limited number of twin and single cabin bookings made before 15 May 2013.

Voyager Fares also provide further savings on selected cruises with limited availability 'cabin guarantees', and passengers who book two consecutive cruises at the same time can save an extra 5%.

For details, contact a travel agent or see the new website at [www.cmvaustralia.com.au](http://www.cmvaustralia.com.au).

## TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

*Cruise Weekly* today features four pages packed full of cruise news, plus see page three for a Singapore Port Review.

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## Deborah tapped for *Illumination*

AUSTRALIAN television personality, Deborah Hutton, has been enlisted by Avalon Waterways to christen *Avalon Illumination*.

"*Avalon Illumination* will be one of our new Suite Ships, featuring a revolutionary design which Avalon Waterways in Australia helped create, so we are very excited that Deborah, a well-loved and well-known Australian, will name her," said Avalon Waterways Managing Director Australasia Stewart Williams.

Designed specifically with Aussie travellers in mind, the vessel will launch in June next year, and will sport two decks of all-suite accommodation with wall-to-wall panoramic windows.

*Illumination* will offer itineraries along the Rhine and Danube Rivers will include an

impressive central lobby, an elegant dining room, a club and main lounge, a hair salon, a gym, an internet corner and wi-fi access, as well as Avalon's popular rooftop Sky Deck with a whirlpool and open-air bistro.



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## Cruise Calendar

*Cruise Weekly's* cruise calendar details upcoming port calls of passenger cruise ships at various destinations in Australia.

SYDNEY	
<i>Artania</i>	Tue 12 Feb
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	Wed 13 Feb
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	Thu 14 Feb
<i>Amsterdam</i>	Fri 15 Feb
<i>Seabourn Quest</i>	Sat 16 Feb
<i>Ausuka II</i>	Sun 17 Feb
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	Mon 18 Feb
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Mon 18 Feb
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	Tue 19 Feb

BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	Tue 12 Feb
<i>Crystal Symphony</i>	Wed 13 Feb
<i>Seabourn Quest</i>	Thu 14 Feb
<i>Ausuka II</i>	Fri 15 Feb
<i>Artania</i>	Sat 16 Feb
<i>Sun Princess</i>	Mon 18 Feb
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	Mon 18 Feb

MELBOURNE	
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Wed 13 Feb
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	Sat 16 Feb
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	Mon 18 Feb

FREMANTLE	
<i>Silver Whisper</i>	Tue 12 Feb
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	Fri 15 Feb

CAIRNS	
<i>Asuka II</i>	Tue 12 Feb
<i>Crystal Symphony</i>	Sat 16 Feb
<i>Artania</i>	Tue 19 Feb

HOBART	
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	Thu 14 Feb
<i>Amsterdam</i>	Mon 18 Feb

## Treasures of Southeast Asia

**TAUCK** has launched a new 16-day Treasures of Southeast Asia cruise/tour of Hong Kong, Vietnam and Singapore, including an 11-day *Le Soléal* cruise with ports of call including Hai Phong, Da Nang, Hoi An, Nha Trang and Ho Chi Minh City, see [www.traveltheworld.com.au](http://www.traveltheworld.com.au).

## HAL launches shipboard charity walk

Australia's Cancer Council is among six global beneficiaries of Holland America Line's new 'On Deck For A Cause'.

**THE** fundraising program, to be held on 500 worldwide HAL cruises a year, will for the first time raise funds for six cancer organisations outside of the US, including Australia, Netherlands, Germany, Canada and the UK.

Tony Archbold, HAL's director of sales Australia, jointly launched the program onboard *Oosterdam* in Sydney last week with Gillian Batt, director of cancer information services, Cancer Council, and the ship's Captain Arjen van der Loo.

Archbold said passengers on the line's 15 ships would be invited to donate US\$20 to the Holland America Line Foundation and to participate in the group 5km walk around the promenade deck (9-12 laps) on every sailing this year.

Proceeds will be divided among the different countries' charities according to passengers' nationalities, he said.

"Our fundraising programs in the past have mostly focused on American charities, but now, every quarter we will review the percentage of passengers from Australia to determine the percentage of funds to be provided to Cancer Council Australia."

HAL decided to extend the program globally to reflect the line's changing passenger mix, which is now 25% international, 75% US.

"Because Australia is the second biggest provider of guests to Holland America, the Cancer Council should benefit greatly from this," Archbold said.

The campaign is the first major charity announcement for HAL Australia since it opened an office in Sydney.

*Oosterdam* Captain van der Loo said HAL had been involved in a similar program since 2006, raising more than US\$3 million, and he expected "an overwhelming response" from passengers. "Guests are very responsive because it is fun

and they enjoy the feeling of giving back to the world," he said.

One in two Australians are predicted to face cancer in their lifetime, Batt said, and money raised through On Deck for a Cause will directly fund Cancer Council's research, prevention and support services.

Walks will take place on all ships sailing in every continent from Australia to Antarctica, with the full program to be implemented in the coming month.

See [hollandamerica.com.au](http://hollandamerica.com.au).

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## Triumph adrift near Mexico

AN engine room fire aboard Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Triumph* has made the vessel not such a 'Fun Ship', with the 4200 passengers and crew on board surviving on cold food, sweltering temperatures, no airconditioning and just a few working toilets.

The ship was crippled about 200km off the coast of Mexico, and although the automatic fire extinguishing system put out the blaze, the vessel has since been drifting and waiting to be towed all the way back into port.

Some pax have taken to sleeping in makeshift tents on the deck, and other reports claim that before an emergency generator got some of the plumbing working, passengers were forced to go to the toilet in plastic bags which they turned over to crew members for disposal.

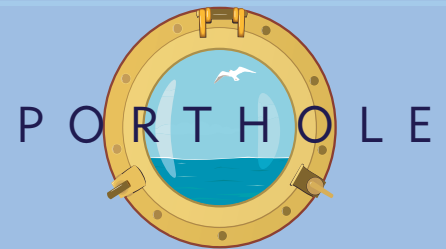
## Spanish lifeboat tragedy

EUROPEAN media outlets are reporting the accidental death of five cruise members onboard *Thomson Majesty*, after a lifeboat fell from the ship during an emergency drill.

The ship was docked at Santa Cruz, La Palma in the Canary Islands when the tragedy occurred, with reports saying the lifeboat fell around 17 metres from the side of the ship into the ocean, and then capsized, killing five crew and seriously injuring three others.

Around 2,000 guests were onboard when the lifeboat fell, however as it was a crew-only exercise, and no guests were involved in the drill.

The event has led to renewed calls from the trade union for seafarers, Nautilus International, for an end to having lifeboats peopled when lowered during emergency drills.



**EVER** wanted to sneak a peek at the waste management of Cunard?

Cunard has announced new Behind the Scenes Tours for guests who want look into the inner workings of its legendary liners: *QM2*, *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Victoria*.

The tours will be led by Cunard senior officers and will offer unprecedented access to the ships' private areas, such as the Bridge, Royal Court Theatre, Galley, main crew passageway, Medical Centre, Engine Control Room, Butcher's Shop, Waste Management area and the Mooring Deck.

Tour leaders will talk on topics ranging from environmental matters, such as recycling cooking oil, to the logistics of stocking more than 5000 lines of consumable products.

The tours last three and a half hours and cost US\$120 per person.

## Top cruise agents awarded

**THE** cruise industry's best performers were recognised at the annual Cruise Industry Awards in Sydney on Saturday night.

The Australian Cruise Agency of the Year, for the second time, was Phil Hoffmann Travel, Glenelg (SA).

Runners-up were Our Vacation Centre, Gaven, (Qld) and Cruiseabout Turrumurra (NSW).

Cruiseabout's agent Robert Watson was named Australian Cruise Consultant of the Year.

The winner of the Neil Frazer Award for an Outstanding Contribution by an Individual was APT director Geoff McGeary, who has worked in the industry for 50 years.

Emma Blacklow, of RACT Travelworld Hobart, received the Rising Star Award.

New Zealand Cruise Agency of the Year was Cruiseabout Parnell (gold), followed by Auckland's Cruise Republic and Lets Cruise. NZ Cruise Consultant of the Year was Cruise Republic's Sarah Goldfinch.

Hosted by the International Cruise Council Australasia, with TV personality Deborah Hutton as MC, the event was attended by 400 guests.

Speaking at the awards, president and CEO of Cruise Lines International Association, Christine Duffy congratulated travel agents for the role they have played in the growth of the local industry.



## Port Review: Singapore

by Cruise Sales Manager, Roger Condon

Everyone tends to have a favourite Asian city. Some prefer the frenetic and sometimes frustrating energy of Bangkok, while others enjoy the mix of colonial and Chinese traditions under the looming glass towers in Hong Kong, but for many it is the stately elegance of Singapore, the seemingly perfect recipe of East meets West that receives top marks for repeat travellers to Asia.

Singapore often anchors one end of your Asian cruise, especially when you're looking at a voyage through Vietnam. It offers loads to see, do and experience and I'd recommend you stay at least two nights, however, three would be better.

There are two cruise terminals in Singapore. The first, the Singapore Cruise Centre is nearby famous Sentosa Island. It's extremely busy with ferry traffic and an array of shops over a couple of levels and good transport links, but the walk to the ship is very long. The brand new Marina Bay Cruise Centre is located much closer to Colonial Singapore, the striking Marina Bay Sands Hotel and the innovative Gardens by the Bay. Boasting just a few shops, it is a nice space with easy access to taxis to get you further afield. There's free wireless internet, currency exchange, and traveller information.

To get around taxis are reasonable in cost and there's also a great metro system. The city offers good budget hotels, plus some of the finest hotels you'll find anywhere in Asia including Raffles and the new Marina Bay Sands Hotel, which is a tourist attraction in itself with its space-age looking roof-top observation deck and infinity pool.

Orchard Road downtown is where you'll find endless shopping. Designer name clothing and electronics are the go here, as well as some traditional crafts. Close by is Little India and also Chinatown, both of which are well worth your extra attention and showcase Singapore's diverse cultural roots. 2013's new attraction is Marina Bay Gardens celebrating everything 'clean' and 'green', an environmental walk by day and a dazzling light display by night. I'd also recommend a visit to the beautiful Singapore Zoo and a separate visit to the Singapore Night Safari, where all manner of night creatures can be seen.

## Roger's Quick Tips

**Best Months:** Year-round - Dec-Jun particularly good

**Don't Miss:** Afternoon tea or Singapore Sling at Raffles

**Tour or Not:** Do it on your own

**Sightseeing:** Gardens by the Bay, Chinatown, Little India

**Food:** Everything from Asian to French

**Language:** English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil

**Shopping:** Orchard Road

**Cash or Card:** Credit card or cash



Gardens by the Bay

By Roger Condon, cruise sales manager, Discover the World Marketing - with 15 years at sea.

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## Azamara in fine trim for welterweight stoush

by: Roderick Eime

Cruise ships, like elite boxers, come in all shapes and sizes. From nimble flyweight cruisers with a dozen or so berths, to the new super heavyweights carrying passengers in their thousands, there are vessels to cater to every taste and budget.

While mass market luxury may seem an oxymoron, there is a category of ship designed to deliver the comforts and onboard accoutrements of the familiar, ocean-going vessels, but retaining the low volume, crowd-free comforts of the more exclusive, boutique ships.

This 'small ship' category is certainly larger than those normally seen on these pages, but warrant mention based on their ability to provide a more personal, intimate experience while still retaining the range of enriching worldwide itineraries otherwise reserved for the great liners.

Azamara Club Cruises featured in Gourmet Travellers' "Top 10 luxury cruise companies", rubbing gunwales with the likes of Seabourn, Silversea, SeaDream and Hapag-Lloyd. Lofty company indeed, although you could easily expand that list to include Ponant and possibly Paul Gaugin.

Azamara's two 700-passenger ships, *Journey* and *Quest*, both recently underwent drydock refurbishments and emerged with a distinctive new blue livery applied to their superstructure. But the upgrades were not limited to simply a coat of paint and new drapes.

Shipwide renovations included new carpets, upholstery, and a new colour palette in public spaces reflecting the cruise line's inviting atmosphere; new mattresses and upgraded veranda furniture for suites and staterooms; and a resurfaced pool, and new sun lounges and pool towels on the outer decks. The Casino Bar also was expanded and enhanced with new furniture, while the Spa and fitness centre was refreshed with a new steam room, showers, and

state-of-the-art Life Fitness cardio equipment. Crew areas were also upgraded.

On the culinary front, guests can now enjoy a new caviar and champagne bar within Aqualina, one of the ships' two specialty dining venues, as well as a new Chef's Table concept featuring three wine degustation menus - Italian, French and Californian. At Mosaic Café, the ships' central gathering spot, guests can purchase a freshly brewed cup of bespoke coffee.

To further emphasize the line's point-of-difference, the forthcoming 2013 and 2014 itineraries were overhauled to provide a more destination rich and location immersive experience for Azamara's discerning guests with special attention afforded iconic cruise ports in eight of the world's most exciting destinations, including Rome, Athens, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Istanbul, Jordan and Israel, India, and China.

**CW** travelled aboard *Azamara Journey* almost straight from dry dock in Singapore, through Vietnam to Hong Kong, with extended stops in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ha Long Bay, allowing us to venture as far afield as Hanoi or enjoy a relaxing cruise among the signature limestone formations.

"Azamara Club Cruises' guests have an unquenchable desire to immerse themselves in the history, culture and night life of the destinations we visit, which is why we offer them longer stays, more overnights and night touring," said Claudius Docekal, the Deployment and Destinations specialist to the assembled media guests.

With these revamped itineraries and yet more guest inclusions planned, Azamara is making its presence felt in this exclusive small ship club.

For more information, contact your CLIA/ICCA travel agent, visit [www.azamaraclubcruises.com](http://www.azamaraclubcruises.com) or call 1800 754 500.



Azamara Quest



Inside luxury



Azamara's gourmet offerings

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