



Windstar to return to South Pacific

For the first time in more than a decade, the luxury small-ship line will be based in Tahiti for six months next year.

WINDSTAR Cruises has announced it will introduce 28 seven-day voyages, commencing May 2014, departing from Papeete and visiting five French Polynesian islands.

The move marks the first time that the company has had a ship sailing in the region since 2002.

Cruises will be aboard the recently renovated 148-pax yacht, *Wind Spirit*, which has never before operated in the South Pacific.

Islands on the new itinerary include Bora Bora, Moorea, Taha'a, Raiatea and Huahine.

"Windstar's return to Tahiti has always been the number one request from our guests and travel partners, even more than a decade later," said Hans Birkholz, Windstar Cruises' chief executive officer.

"We've listened and made the decision that now is the perfect time to come back to the beautiful islands of French Polynesia," Birkholz added.

The last voyage departs on 07 Nov 2014, before the start of the winter season in Panama and Costa Rica.

The striking vessel, with six tall sails, is wind-driven when the conditions are right and the engines are cut.

It has a watersports platform, which offers paddle boards, kayaks, water skiing, wind surfing and snorkeling equipment.

Clients will enjoy local entertainment, such as traditional Tahitian dancers coming on board one evening, as well as regional dishes

added to Windstar's signature deck barbecue.

Shore excursions will be tailored to provide experiential and romantic options.

Wind Spirit's Tahiti program opens for bookings from the public in mid-Mar 2013.

For details, visit windstarcruises.com.

Princess expands Japan

PRINCESS Cruises has its sights firmly set on Japan in 2014, with the announcement that it will almost double its capacity in the region with *Diamond Princess* joining *Sun Princess* between Apr and Oct next year.

The duo will offer 42 departures from three homeports: Tokyo, Kobe, and (in an industry first), Otaru near Sapporo on Hokkaido, with itineraries ranging from seven- to nine-days, visiting more than 20 ports in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Russia.

"We were the first international cruise line brand to offer a full season of cruises designed specifically for passengers from Japan, and we continue to believe there is substantial untapped demand for cruise vacations here," said Alan Buckelew, president of Princess Cruises.

"With a second, larger ship and our groundbreaking itineraries in 2014 we look forward to continuing to help develop the full potential of the cruise market in Japan," he added.

During her time in the region, *Diamond* will homeport in Tokyo, and will feature a range of nine-day cruises (including five new itineraries) taking in Taiwan, South Korea, Hokkaido, Russia as well as 15 other Japanese ports.

Meanwhile, *Sun Princess* will sail seven-day voyages from Otaru as well as eight-day voyages from Kobe, and will debut calls to the Japanese islands of Ishigaki, and Amami Oshima, as well as Abashiri and Hualien, Taiwan.

To cater to the Japanese market, the cruise line has also announced several regional ship enhancements, including an a la carte sushi bar, Japanese breakfast, noodle bar, regional tea tastings, and special sake menu.

Phil Hoffman OAM

AUSSIE success story, Phil Hoffman of Phil Hoffman Travel has been named as a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia for "significant service to the travel and tourism industry through contributions to professional associations and the development of training standards".

Hoffman was honoured for his tireless work and past and present roles within the industry including: chair of the South Australian Tourism Commission, AFTA director, managing director of Phil Hoffmann Travel and co-founder of CruiseCo.



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Cruise News & Views



Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

Global News

HEADLINES across most sections of the media today relate to the next eight months of political pain that we have to endure with the Prime Minister's announcement of a September 14th Federal election.

For me news of greater importance was the latest update on the global roll out of CLIA. For those just returning from an extended festive season, the International Cruise Council Australasia (ICCA) will be re-branding as Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) in the months ahead.

Overnight our Global CEO, Christine Duffy announced that in addition to the nine cruise industry associations from around the world that are pulling together to form one global entity, there are now two more national cruise associations joining the global team - The Netherlands and France.

Further to this CLIA is also currently developing a German cruise council to be based in Hamburg which will be named CLIA Germany. Later this year, CLIA will also be establishing cruise councils in Italy and Spain, which will ensure a strong local presence for the industry in those key markets.

How does this impact us in Australia & New Zealand? An enhanced reach into more foreign markets will ensure increased benefits and a globally unified voice for cruise lines, travel agents and business partners – all of whom contribute to an industry that already creates nearly \$100 billion in economic impact and more than 753,000 jobs worldwide.

Changing tastes impact profits

Clients' tastes appear to be changing, and it's having a dramatic impact on the profits of some cruise companies.

ONCE lucrative for cruise lines, pre/post packages and shore excursions sold on board are not the money-spinners they used to be, according to respected industry figure Claudius Docekal, in charge of deployment and development for Azamara Club Cruises.

In an exclusive interview with *Cruise Weekly* at the Seatrade Cruise Forum, held last week in Hong Kong, Docekal said: "Firstly, the traditional pre/post packages are losing their appeal, primarily in the major ports such as Singapore, because people can go easily on the internet and select exactly the hotel they want days before sailing and get a room for a much cheaper price, than what the cruise line pre-selected months before at a higher price."

In Europe, pre/post packages "really aren't worth our time hardly anymore", Docekal said.

The online availability of cheaper and more personalised shore excursions, land tours and airport transfers was a continuing issue, especially if clients have "a competent travel agent".

He said this trend for clients to make their own arrangements is increasingly impacting cruise lines' bottom line.

"The price of cruising has really dropped over the last couple of years and it costs a lot of money to operate a ship with fuel, port charges and competition, so for the cruise lines it's necessary for them to supplement their income with onboard revenue, so the sale of shore excursions becomes very important and

I'd say, yes, the loss of our participation is definitely an issue for us.

"We're seeing a lot of guests come on board, they have a certain budget and they select to spend it on a nice bottle or wine, or spend it on a shore excursion - but they won't do both," he said.

The types of shore excursion have also changed, Docekal observed.

"In the old days, guests used to be satisfied sitting on a bus for three hours to see an attraction, take a picture and go back to the ship.

"There are certain clients who are still looking for this type of tour, but they are getting fewer and fewer".

Instead, most of today's cruise passengers want to be "hands on" and to mix with the locals, he said.

"People want to interact with the destination, to touch it, to smell it, feel it," he added.

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Brochure Spotlight

Carnival's new 2013 Europe Cruise Holiday Planner brochure has Europe covered.

The brochure details *Carnival Legend's* two 12-night Med forays including the Grand Mediterranean (22 Apr) and Western

Mediterranean (09 Jun) cruises; as well as the ships two 12-night Northern Europe voyages: Russia & Scandinavia (03 Jul) and Northern and Western Europe (01 Sep).

Also detailed in the brochure are *Carnival Sunshine's* nine-night Mediterranean voyage roundtrip from Barcelona (17 May), and her 12-night Mediterranean, Turkey & Greece cruise from Venice to Barcelona on 20 Oct.

For a copy see www.traveltheworld.com.



New RCI payment email

ROYAL Caribbean has announced that it has created a new email address (payments.au@rcclapac.com), to streamline the way it processes payment notifications.

The address is active now, but to allow agencies time to update internal processes, the official launch date is 04 Feb 2013.

To ensure notifications are processed on time, emails should be sent to the new address with a copy to accounts.au@rcclapac.com by 4.30pm Sydney time, otherwise the email may not be processed until the following day.

Fram not rescued, but helped

NORWEGIAN cruise company Hurtigruten has struck back at reports that the British Navy rescued *MV Fram* in Antarctica (**CW** 24 Jan), saying the ship never required rescuing from ice.

The Navy had initially issued a press release saying the *HMS Protector* spent two hours guiding *Fram* to safety in Antarctica last week.

Hurtigruten has since released its own statement clarifying the situation, saying "*MS Fram* had decided not to sail to one of its landing points of Brown Bluff in Antarctica as the ice conditions in the area that day were challenging".

"The *HMS Protector* was sailing in the area and they offered assistance to *MS Fram* so that the ship could sail to Brown Bluff.

"The ship was therefore escorted in and out of Brown Bluff by *HMS Protector*".

American cruise success

AMERICAN Cruise Lines has announced unprecedented sales at the start of its official Wave Season, with each of the past four weeks breaking previous sales records.

In fact the cruises have been so popular that last week was the most successful sales week in the company's entire history.

"We predicted sales growth this year with a full second season on the Mississippi and the addition of our new Puget Sound itinerary," said Timothy Beebe, vice president of American Cruise Lines.

"It's been even more significant than we had hoped.

"We'll be adding additional cruises on our most popular itineraries to meet the demand," he added.

The sales growth has been attributed to growing travel agent partnerships, as ACL reaches out and builds relationships with more agents both in the US and abroad.

"We are working with more new travel agents and our existing travel partners are booking more cruises than ever," said Beebe.

"In addition to a growing agent community, repeat customer rates have reached an all-time high, with more guests taking advantage of the renewed loyalty program, The Eagle Society," he added.

For info see www.americancruiselines.com.

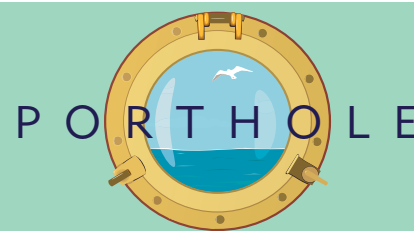
TravelManagers and CruiseCo

FROM 01 Apr TravelManagers new CruiseManagers brand will enjoy full membership and all the associated benefits of the CruiseCo consortium.

"Our personal travel managers who are master accredited with the ICCA or selling a high volume of cruise sales and are members of CruiseManagers will now be able to offer an alternative and established choice to new entrant Cruise Holidays Australia," said Michael Gazal, executive gm of TravelManagers.

"Personal travel managers (PTMs) qualifying for our CruiseManagers' brand will still be able to work independently from home but will have access to CruiseCo's member only extensive cruise training including, but not limited to, selling fly/cruise, preparing a cruise marketing plan and managing a cruise database," he added.

In addition, PTMs will be able to access CruiseCo offers including fly/cruise holiday product and special group departures, as well as a professional reservations facility to accept bookings for member offers.



ANOTHER reason to chose the seas over skies.

Iconic tea company Twinings has said research suggests that the taste of tea can be reduced by a whopping 30% when flying at altitude.

The finding, sure to inspire the ire of tea lovers worldwide, is due to several contributing issues including the fact that water boils at just 89 degrees Celsius at 35,000ft, which is too cool to squeeze all the taste out of a good black tea.

To combat this tea tragedy, Twinings has partnered with British Airways, to create a tea 30% stronger than its usual brew.

Hurtigruten downsizing

HURTIGRUTEN has announced a shake-up of its Sales Nordic operations, which will include general administrative staff reductions (downsizing 25-30%) and centralising activities to a new corporate centre in Tromsø and phasing out of the current operations in Narvik.

The company will also increase its focus on hotel and restaurant operations by competence development and improved services.

Tauck to add two ships in 2014

TAUCK will beef up its European river cruise offering next year, with the launch of two new riverboats and four new river cruise itineraries.

Slated for delivery in Mar and Jun 2014, the vessels are being custom-built for Tauck, and will have features and amenities not found on its existing vessels.

"But they'll also retain key elements and the same overall philosophy that have contributed so significantly to our success," said company ceo Dan Mahar.

According to Mahar, the ships will accommodate fewer guests than similarly sized vessels in other lines, and will have will have a high "guide-to-guest" ratio.

"By limiting passenger capacity we're able to offer a much higher percentage of suites, and provide the same intimate, club-like atmosphere our river cruise customers have come to enjoy with Tauck," said Mahar.

As for the new itineraries, they will cruise the Seine, Rhine or Danube rivers, however no other details have yet been revealed.



Face to Face interview: Craig Owens

Director of Key Accounts and Communications at Oceania Cruises

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

How did you get into the cruise industry?

I moved to Sydney from the country and secured a job as the office boy at P&O Cruises in 1985.

What is the key to your success?

Having experience in a number of different areas of the industry. From reservations, to international flight, hotel and transfer arrangements, sales and port operations. Listen and learn from your colleagues. A sense of humour and patience has also helped.

How many cruises have you been on in the past year/five years?

Ten.

What is your favourite destination, and why?

I love the Mediterranean. What a joy it is to wake up every day in another country.

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

Escorting an incentive group from India onboard the *Vistafjord* whilst working at Cunard Line. It was the biggest rollercoaster ride of my life!

How do you spend days at sea?

A walk around the deck after breakfast. Team trivia before lunch and the luxury of a nana-nap in the afternoon. Days at sea I just adore, it's where ships come alive.

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

The current climate allows us showcase the outstanding value of a cruise. Particularly tactical offers in the luxury market where there are more inclusions.

How can cruising attract more families?

A cruise really does represent incredible value for a family. I was fortunate to spend time at MSC Cruises, who were the pioneers in children and teenagers cruising for free. MSC and a number of other cruise lines have amazing facilities for families.

What is your best tip for sea-sickness?

Fresh air up on deck works best for me.



Craig's Cruise Favourites!

Favourite Ship: *Nautica*

Favourite ship activity: Team trivia

Favourite shore excursion: Visiting Leptis Magnus in Libya

Favourite region: The Mediterranean, followed closely by Alaska

Favourite port: Barcelona

Favourite onboard food/drink: Dinner in Toscana onboard *Oceania*

Favourite perk of the job: The amazing people I have had the privilege of working with.

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