



Agents protected from Euro floods

Travel agents will not be hit financially as a result of river cruise cancellations in Europe caused by recent floods.

DESPITE a number of river cruise departures not proceeding due to widespread flooding in Europe, five of the largest river cruise operators selling in Australia have declared agents will still receive commissions from

affected bookings through insurance claims.

Avalon Waterways, Uniworld, APT, Scenic Tours, Travelmarvel and Tauck have all advised **Cruise Weekly** that a number of cruises in operation were affected by the Europe floods - described as the worst in 100 years.

Christian Schweitzer, marketing manager for Avalon Waterways, said alternate cruise itineraries had been offered to pax affected by the floods, with coach tours, hotel stays and sight-seeing tours made available where possible to minimise holiday disruptions.

Two Travelmarvel and seven APT departures operated by three vessels in late May and early Jun were either disrupted or cancelled, with all three returning to service from 20 Jun.

Alternate accommodation was arranged for one affected Tauck voyage, while five voyages were cancelled between 30 May and 14 Jun.

Uniworld reservations staff have been in frequent contact with agents and passengers to reaccommodate where possible, with one cancellation and two ship changes taking place on a pair of voyages between Vienna and Belgrade, and all else operating as normal.

No cancellations were experienced by Scenic Tours, with only three ship-swaps, with the company saying the consistency on its vessels meant guests were unaffected by the changes.

Agents with affected pax are advised to look for updates via individual pax company websites.

Buttrose to host Tauck voyage

AUSTRALIAN of the Year for 2013 and Tauck Ambassador Ita Buttrose will personally host and take part in an upcoming French Waterways river cruise from Paris to Lyon in her role with the company.

The voyage will operate in May next year aboard the *MS Swiss Emerald* and will see the well-known journalist and author host a cocktail party for guests on the ten-day sailing as well as interact with guests during activities.

One free night prior to or following the cruise can be enjoyed for Earlybird bookings made by 31 Aug - see www.traveltheworld.com.au.

Frequent visits from Seabourn

TWO Seabourn vessels will visit Australian waters during the upcoming summer season, with *Seabourn Odyssey* set to spend three months operating in Australia & NZ as part of its third season in local waters.

Marking its biggest local season ever, *Odyssey* will make 22 calls at 11 local ports ranging from Darwin and Cairns in the north to Geelong and Burnie on the country's lower tip.

Seabourn Sojourn will itself visit 11 Aussie ports as part of a 116-day world cruise, visiting Eden, Burnie, Bunbury, Geraldton and more.

Another great CW issue

Today's trade issue of **CW** features four pages of all the latest cruise information.



Join Ita Buttrose cruising the French Waterways in May 2014 and see why the way you sip wine matters!

WHO YOU CRUISE WITH MATTERS



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Group bookings a boon for SeaDream

A travel agent can earn \$80,000 for selling one charter of a SeaDream yacht.

ASIDE from its loyal clientele, SeaDream Yacht Club has had "some nice group bookings" for its inaugural Asia/Australia season, according to company president Bob Lepisto.

One voyage has been chartered by a European client and another by a Brazilian, he said.

Speaking to **CW**, Lepisto said chartering continued to be popular for the luxurious 112-passenger vessels, *SeaDream I* and *SeaDream II*.

"There is more and more interest in celebrating milestone events in very special and unique ways," he said.

"If a client charters the whole yacht, the agent can earn US\$70,000-80,000 on one sale."

Lepisto said he was "very pleased" about sales for this year's Asia/Australia program, with more bookings by locals and Europeans than North Americans, but it was not yet sold out.

"There's an indication we'll be coming into the period where we'll get additional bookings," he said.

"Everybody's talking about Myanmar, and we have two 13-day voyages with two nights in Yangon that's really got people excited."

Lepisto confirmed that the company's signature 'Champagne & Caviar Splash' beach parties would be held on islands in Myanmar and Thailand.

"The Cairns to Bali itinerary, via Papua New Guinea, is also a really interesting one", he said.

"It was important to come up with new destinations because we have so many very loyal guests and great travel agents who promote us, as well as crew who wanted to experience new areas."

Immediately prior to the Asia/Australia season, *SeaDream II* will undergo a 16-day drydock in Singapore, only two years after the last refurbishment.

"To command the kind of price points we command, we need to keep our yachts in impeccable condition," Lepisto said.

He urged local agents to contact the company's director of business development Australia, Julie Denovan, for any assistance.

"We sincerely appreciate their support, and I personally love to hear from our friends in Australia – we'll do anything for their selling needs for us."

For more details, phone (02) 9958 4444 or head to www.seadream.com.

Norfolk back on cruise radars

CARNIVAL Australia CEO Ann Sherry has said the company will be looking at the possibility of increasing visitation of cruise ships to Norfolk Island following the announcement earlier this week of a \$13m Federal Govt cash injection into new cruise facilities (**CW** Tue).

"With the knowledge that the new infrastructure is on the way we'll be looking at increasing P&O Cruises' visits to Norfolk Island again once the works are complete," she said.

"We'll also be spreading the word amongst Carnival Australia's other brands including Princess Cruises, Carnival Cruise Lines, Cunard, Holland America Line, Seabourn and P&O Cruises World Cruising to let them know that Norfolk Island will soon be back on the cruise map," Sherry added.

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PORTHOLE

FOR even the most die-hard Boston baseball fan, too much Red Sox is nowhere near enough Red Sox.

Now, fans of the seven-time World Series winners can gather in one place to celebrate their Sox obsession aboard a special cruise operated by Celebrity Cruises with up to 2,886 fellow Red Sox Nation members.

The voyage comes as a result of a recent commercial partnership between the Sox and Celebrity Cruises which will see the company host fan giveaways at the team's Fenway Park home games.

Sailing aboard the *Celebrity Silhouette*, the 2014 Red Sox Fan Cruise will set sail from Fort Lauderdale on Jan 12 next year, stopping at Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Falmouth, Jamaica and Labadee in Haiti.

Former Red Sox players are set to attend, with special activities including a Red Sox karaoke night (sure to include the team's unofficial anthem, which interestingly is Neil Diamond's classic hit Sweet Caroline).

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Cruise News & Views...

Brett Jardine - General Manager

National Cruise Week

LAST week, we announced that National Cruise Week (NCW) 2013 will take place from September 2 – 9. To take advantage of this event it is important for you to prepare in advance. Remember the five P's – Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.

If you are on the ball, you will already have the date firmly logged in your calendar - but don't stop there. Results from our post-NCW survey in 2012 showed quite clearly that agents who took an active approach prior to and during the event experienced an increase in sales.

For success to find its way to your agency, all team members need to play their part. Just because it is a major promotion doesn't mean it is the sole responsibility of the store manager to get things moving.

It is also important to realize that during NCW, new bookings WILL NOT drop miraculously from the sky, with little or no effort! To help CLIA Members think about what sort of activity can be undertaken to prepare for NCW, we have put together an Agents Support Pack that can be downloaded from the members area of the NCW website.

In very simple terms, the goal of NCW is to expand the awareness of cruising as a great value holiday option. My advice to you is to "reach out to your database" and identify your cruise clients. Then you want to challenge your satisfied cruise clients to introduce you to a friend who is yet to experience a cruise.

"Sales 101" tells us that making 10 x contacts will lead to 3 x appointments and 1 x sale. If you want 5 sales you need to reach 50 of your clients so keep that in mind in the lead up to NCW.

Orient-Express takes the wraps off Orcaella



ORIENT-EXPRESS Hotels Ltd has released the first photographs of *Orcaella*, its new luxury river vessel launching next month in Myanmar.

The stylish interiors reflect the local surroundings with traditional furniture and works of art by Burmese artists.

With only 25 river-view cabins and suites, featuring floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, the small ship can access less visited communities and Buddhist sites such as the 12th century temple, Thanboddya Pagoda, and the 1,000 Buddhas at Bodhi Tating.

Excursions include a journey into Kalay,

known as the trade gateway to India, and a tour of the candlelit street market.

Orcaella joins sister-ship *Road To Mandalay*, which has been cruising the Ayeyarwady River for the past 17 years.

The 11-night 'Discovering The Chindwin River' is priced from \$5,880 per person including domestic flights, transfers, all meals onboard and shore excursions.

For reservations, call 1800 000 395 or visit www.orcaella.net.

Extreme Makeover on Serenity

MORE than 500 contractors and hundreds of Crystal Cruises crew will take to the *Crystal Serenity* in Nov to put the finishing touches on a \$52m Extreme Makeover who has been slowly carried out over the last two years.

The final stages will be installed & added over a 13-day drydock period, with major works seeing the redesign of Crystal Penthouses and a number of eateries on the Lido Deck.

The Lido Cafe will see long buffet corridors replaced with modern food 'islands', more tables for two diners & a baked goods kitchen.

Penthouses will be reconfigured with a media room added along with a new shower, while the bedroom will receive new beds, curtains and new seating area.

New terminal for the Caymans

A NEW cruise ship terminal will be built in The Cayman Islands in coming years, according to the island nation's Tourism Minister.

Plans for a modern passenger centre in the Caymans capital city were outlined, with meetings recently held with local stakeholders.

The destination is popular with cruise liners operating in the Caribbean, however does not have the facilities to accommodate larger ships or to transfer passengers to land, relying instead on tenders to bring people to shore.

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CRUISE

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Face to Face: Sven Lindblad Founder & President - Lindblad Expeditions

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

How and why did you get into the cruise industry?

I was influenced by [my father] Lars Eric Lindblad who pioneered the idea of using ships to explore remote regions of the world. For me expedition cruising is similar to an African tented safari, where you can pick up camp and move with the herds. Safaris are where I cut my teeth in my 20's.

Where do you see yourself & Lindblad Expeditions in five years?

I see us expanding our exploration of the undersea - the last real frontier on planet earth.

What is the key to your success?

An unwavering commitment to provide our guests with remarkable experiences and a team that fully embraces this concept.

What was your most memorable moment on an expedition?

There are far too many to mention, but the most recent one was in March in Baja, California where a 15ft gray whale calf played with our zodiac for hours. There is an amazing video of it online at www.bit.ly/lindbladbaja.

What is the next "hot spot" in cruising destinations?

I think Australians have some of the most extraordinary geography right in your back yard. Indonesia, PNG, are remarkable for culture, beauty and the undersea. You just have to get away from the "popular" spots.

How can cruising attract more young people and families?

During the US school holidays our ships are dominated by families. Ships and nature are a perfect family vacation- everyone can have a shared experience and the daily distractions that kids have are minimised. Everyone returns home exhilarated with stories that will last a lifetime.

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

To differentiate amongst the options. The word cruising sounds encompassing, but what we do and Carnival does couldn't be more different.

Describe your perfect cruise in 25 words or less?

Waking up with a thousand dolphins, diving on a healthy reef, and watching the sun go down with a glass of great white wine.

What is your best tip for sea-sickness?

Lay down.

What advice would you give other people who want a job like yours?

Be committed, be prepared to work long and hard, know what you don't know and find really smart people to cover those bases.



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