



Weakening dollar yet to impact sales

Luxury lines have not found the falling AUD has affected bookings for cruises priced in other currencies.

AUSTRALIANS are not turned off by the rising cost of cruises priced in American dollars or Euro, according to three top high-end lines.

Karen Christensen, Australasia's director sales & marketing and general manager at Silversea, said the company had benefited from selling in both AUD and USD.

"Back when we made that decision, when the dollar plummeted in 2010, it was one of the smartest decisions we've ever made," she told *Cruise Weekly*.

"Since 2010, we have seen spikes in the business, with people going to one currency over the other, but nothing has changed

dramatically," Christensen added.

"People may hesitate, but it takes a major shift in the economics before they, perhaps, decide to reduce the duration of their overall holiday."

Exchange rates were "only one thing to monitor," she said.

"We have introduced our price guarantee policy, and our fares are in a very competitive place without being silly, so business is ticking over nicely."

Local clients could be reassured by Silversea's model, according to Christensen.

"As a luxury business, we give people choice, even to the point of how they pay, but it's certainly not easy to manage commercially.

"We fix the AUD at a specific exchange rate, and if it drops, Silversea takes the hit."

Her advice to travel agents is to amp up selling now.

"I wouldn't panic – Australia is in a good place with the economy and agencies should continue to market their business.

"This isn't the time to stop marketing luxury cruises – it's time to get more forward bookings," she said.

SeaDream Yacht Club president Bob Lepisto hopes the Australian economy "continues strong and healthy", as its fares are priced only in USD.

"For a while, we were getting Australians asking if they could pay 100% right now – they were definitely playing the currency game."

This trend has eased recently, he said, "since your dollar was really strong."

A spokesperson for Seabourn, also priced in USD, commented: "There's been no discernible affect on sales as a result of the dollar's movement, as Seabourn cruises remains great value for money."

An issue full of cruise news

Today's trade issue of *CW* features four pages of all the latest cruising headlines plus a full page from *Princess Cruises*.

Uniworld flood compensation

RIVER cruise company Uniworld has decided to issue \$500 credit vouchers for passengers affected by the recent floods in Central Europe who were unable to delay or reschedule trips.

In the latest update posted on its website yesterday, some cruises operating on the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers are operating with slightly modified disembarkation points due to lock closures in parts of Austria and high river levels restricting bridge underpasses in some areas in Germany.

Operations on the Douro, Seine, Rhône, Saône and Po rivers have returned to normal.

Clark lands at Cruise Holidays

FORMER Carnival Australia team member and long-time cruising industry staffer Don Clark has joined the management team at Cruise Holidays Australia, starting from 01 Jul.

Clark will assume the role of business development director, tasked with recruiting new agents, spearheading training initiatives and the development of existing members.

MD Les Farrar said Clark will "help to develop the Cruise Holidays brand in Australia".

Peek inside the new Princess

NEWLY christened *Royal Princess* has released a number of images promoting the liner, fresh from a glittering naming ceremony in Southampton last week.

To check out the new staterooms, atrium, one of the pool areas and the revolutionary overwater SeaWalk, check out **page five**.

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Goldstein praises the CLIA effect

Royal Caribbean International president Adam Goldstein has hailed how CLIA has worked to bring cruise firms together on major issues in the last year.

ALTHOUGH fiercely competitive in the global marketplace, described as like “cats and dogs”, Goldstein said he is very happy with the effect that Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) was having on the industry.

Speaking during a speedy one-day visit to Sydney last week, the Royal Caribbean president and CEO said the state of the industry from a global representation point of view prior to CLIA didn’t make a lot of sense.

“We had the situation where there were many more cruise organisations than there were significant cruise companies,” he said.

Earlier this year, the body formerly known as International Cruise Council Australasia morphed into CLIA Australasia (**CW** 21 Mar), complete with a new logo.

“It’s been very apparent in these last months the power that concept of CLIA having a global footprint and being able to present itself to governments, to media, to travel agents and so forth on behalf of the cruise industry globally,” Goldstein said.

“That was very apparent when the different hearings that took place a few months ago were happening – CLIA was speaking with the presence that it wouldn’t have been able to manufacture here in the past.

“When it comes to safety, security, environment, medical and public health – the level of cooperation and interaction is by far the best that I’ve observed in my 25 years in the industry,” he added.

MEANWHILE, popular demand for Royal Caribbean’s WOW Sale saw the sale extended, but has now been confirmed to end tomorrow.

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Sunrise to broadcast in Peru

CHANNEL Seven breakfast program *Sunrise* will next week broadcast from Peru as part of a week-long partnership with APT.

Starting on Mon, Sydney correspondent Edwina Bartholomew will host the destination feature, which will include live broadcasting from the popular Machu Picchu Incan ruins.

Viewers of the program will see a number of highlights of the APT South American program via a special itinerary the company has put together especially for the on-site broadcasts.

An APT Amazon river cruise will also feature, with viewers also able to win amazing prizes.

Tragedy aboard the Sea Spirit

AN AMERICAN cruise ship passenger in her 60’s died tragically this week after being flung into freezing Arctic waters on a shore excursion during an 11-day Spitsbergen Explorer cruise on *Sea Spirit*, operated by Quark Expeditions.

The incident occurred when six passengers in an inflatable Zodiac vessel were hit by a wave near the 14th of July Glacier in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, off Norway’s northern-most tip.

Two others were injured, however the woman died before an evacuation helicopter was able to reach the vessel.

Local authorities carried out an investigation before clearing the ship to continue its voyage.

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Costa pres. may head to MSC

GIANNI Onorato, president of Costa Crociere, is rumoured to be jumping ship to rival MSC Cruises.

Onorato, who has been with the company for more than 25 years, this week resigned from his decade-long position, effectively immediately, with no replacement named yet.

In a statement, Costa said that Onorato had announced he was leaving "to pursue a new career direction."

"I regret Gianni's decision," said Costa CEO Michael Thamm.

"He has played an important role in the development and growth of Costa Crociere."

Several news websites in Italy and the US are reporting that Onorato is heading to MSC Cruises for a role supporting the line's CEO Pierfrancesco Vago.

Onorato has held the president's role of Costa since 2004, after working his way up from his first job as assistant food and beverage manager onboard *Galileo*.

Other Genoa-based positions included cruise product director and vp cruise operations.

If the MSC rumours are true, he would be expected to move to Geneva.

Cunard opens The Verandah

A NEW alternative dining venue has been opened aboard Cunard's *Queen Victoria*.

Dubbed The Verandah, the eatery debuted during a two-week Baltic cruise this month, with the 100-seat venue replacing Todd English.

It is the second Cunard vessel to house a Verandah following *Queen Elizabeth*, although a slightly modified menu is in place.

Cunard president and md Peter Shanks said the new restaurant was an exciting addition to the company's culinary offerings.



CLIA
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Cruise News
& Views...

Brett Jardine - General Manager

Live from C360!

THIS week's column comes at you from Cruise360 in Vancouver. We have a group of close to forty participants attending an event designed to engage the cruise industry's most important distribution channel – the retail travel agent.

C360 is not your normal conference where you can sit back and listen to key note speakers tell you what you need to do for a successful future. At C360, the opportunity exists for individuals to create their own experience based on where they are at in their career today.

There are plenty of educational seminars all aimed at helping agents sell more cruise holidays. There are product workshops delivered by USA based suppliers that will give participants a different perspective on a product that they may not have heard of back home.

C360 offers a trade show where a myriad of exhibitors, all with some direct or indirect connection to cruising, will be pushing their key messages to participants.

Networking opportunities are everywhere and participants have a great opportunity to get amongst the top producing US based agents and understand what they are doing to drive their cruise business.

Then there are ship inspections, with more than twenty member line vessels to choose from, participants will certainly find this week delivers no shortage of variety and opportunity.

This is the first year we have been at C360 as a formal part of the CLIA global team and our delegation includes the UK, Asia and Australasia all joining the USA in what promises to be a great week.



IF REVELLING in a major city to ring in the end of the year and the start of another isn't really your cup of tea, AmaWaterways has the answer for you.

The company will operate a New Year's themed sailing devoted to knitting enthusiasts, cruising the Danube River on the 161-passenger *Amabella*, departing from the German town of Vilshofen on 27 Dec next year.

Passengers will be able to learn new knitting techniques, meet with fellow knit-heads & show off their favourite creations.

Hosting the voyage will be renowned textile expert Barry Klein and former president of the US National Needlework Association, who will run classes on new stitch patterns, show off new luxury yarns & coordinate forums on latest knitting trends.

However, music and dancing will still be a part of the cruise, with a festive celebration to be held on 31 Dec to see in 2015.

Eight in the Caribbean for HAL

HOLLAND America Line has announced it will deploy eight ships to operate 109 voyages in the Caribbean for the 2013-14 Northern winter season.

Itineraries offered will be of durations up to 25 days, with sailings to operate from both Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, both in Florida.

The company will deploy *Eurodam*, *Ryndam*, *Maasdam*, *Nieuw Amsterdam*, *Noordam*, *Veendam*, *Westerdam* and *Zuiderdam* to operate the sailings, with departures from Fort Lauderdale including a stop at the company's private Bahamian island - Half Moon Cay.

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More dressing up on Crystal

SIX new themed cruises will be introduced to the Crystal Cruises range next year based on positive responses from previous sailings.

A total of 23 themed departures will occur at different times of the year aboard *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity*.

The new themes include Extreme Thrill Seekers, which will see expert shark divers and underwater photographers on board, sailing from Singapore to Cape Town on 10 Mar 2014.

An Explorations in Elegance itinerary will run from London to Rome and will feature auction house experts discussing rare jewels, wines and exquisitely priced real estate.

Other themes are titled Gladiators & Empires, Up Close and Magical, Wine & Food: Microbrews and Maritime: Past, Present and Future, with the latter cruising from San Diego to Auckland on 28 Oct aimed at enthusiasts of legendary ocean-going battles and the luxury of the liners of yesteryear.

Popular themes operating again include the Mind, Body & Spirit, Film & Theatre, Ocean Views, Emerging Artists, Crystal Society and the President's Cruise featuring the attendance of company president Gregg Michel.

Scenic tour during World Cup

SEVERAL Scenic Tours departures have been scheduled to be in Brazil during next year's FIFA World Cup tournament, of which Australia was this week confirmed as a participant.

The company's 20-day Icons of South America itinerary will operate as normal, with places priced from \$10,995ppts.

Free flights for companion travellers are also available on this itinerary if booked by 31 Aug.

Royal tea party to celebrate Royal Princess

SOUTHAMPTON

was not the only place celebrating the arrival and christening of the newest Princess Cruises liner - *Royal Princess* last week.

Here in Sydney, the team at the Princess Cruises office decided to invite some of the staff from Cruise1st to don their crowns for a Royal tea party.

Pictured at right enjoying a few cups of Mighty Leaf tea and cakes courtesy of Princess' tea tower, from left around the table is Nicholas McHugh, Annemarie Vaccaro and Brett Wendorf from Princess Cruises with Vanessa Harrison, Gary Swift and Gareth Evison from Cruise 1st.



Round the world again we go

RESERVATIONS have been opened on the 2015 global circumnavigation by Silversea Cruises' elegant *Silver Whisper* vessel.

The 115-day voyage has been scheduled to depart from Los Angeles, visiting 30 countries on five continents and 50 ports, heading west.

Among the destinations visited will be French Polynesia followed by Australia before heading to Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Seychelles, Cape Town, Fort Lauderdale, Puerto Rico, St Barts and many others.

A 17-day Panama Canal pre-cruise extension from Fort Lauderdale to the embarkation port of Los Angeles is also available, as is a post-voyage extension to New York & Southampton.

Staterooms for the full circumnavigation are priced from US\$58,950ppts, with the itinerary in full at www.silversea.com/worldcruise2015.

Fire on Hapag-Lloyd Hanseatic

TWO upcoming voyages aboard the Hapag-Lloyd vessel *MS Hanseatic* have been cancelled after a fire occurred in the engine room while the ship was in scheduled drydock in Germany.

The 17 Jun and 04 Jul voyages from Bremerhaven & Tromso respectively have been shelved in order for repairs to be carried out.

A statement from the company said "The additional and necessary repairs to eliminate the damage cannot be completed within the scheduled time at the shipyard".

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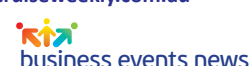
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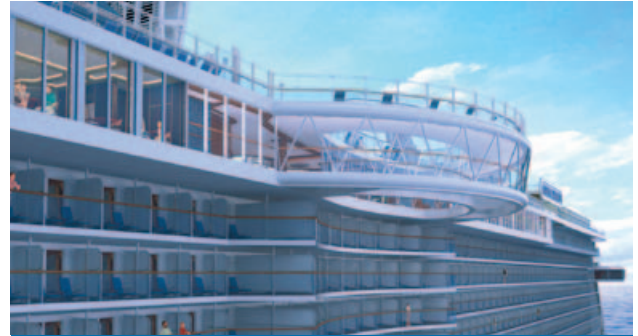
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