Cruise Weekly's guest expert, Adam Armstrong from Royal Caribbean answers some of your cruising-related queries. If you have a question you’d like answered, send it to expert@cruiseweekly.com.au and some of Adam’s responses will be exclusively published in CW over the next three weeks.

Will there be a coke freestyle machine on Rhapsody of the Seas by the end of the year?

We are currently rolling out Coke Freestyle machines on six of our ships based in Florida and New Jersey, USA (Majesty, Explorer, Freedom, Oasis, Allure and Enchantment of the Seas). Unfortunately we don’t currently have plans to add the machines onboard our ships in Australia - but we’ll certainly be monitoring how they perform.

With the new gratuities policy, are we able to remove the gratuities and pay staff individually in cash at the end of the cruise? In a word - yes. We offer three ways of paying gratuities. Firstly, many of our guests pre-pay them when they book their cruise - it’s a convenient and stress-free way to do it and we ensure that all gratuities are shared amongst the great crew members onboard. Secondly, you can pay for them with your onboard account. We recommend a daily amount per guest - and you can adjust the amount as you wish. Finally, if you prefer, you can request to have all charges removed from your onboard account and pay your waiters and cabin attendant in cash. The choice is yours.

I am taking a Royal Caribbean cruise in March. I have been told you may bring two 750ml bottles of wine or champagne onboard with you on embarkation day and this should be packed in your carry-on luggage, but can only consumed in your cabin. Is this information true? Yes, that’s right - we’ve just changed our policy and you are allowed to bring personal wine or champagne onboard on embarkation. You can consume them in a public area, subject to a corkage fee of US$25.00 per bottle. Any additional bottles of wine or any alcoholic beverages purchased in ports-of-call or from shops on board will be stored by the ship and delivered to your stateroom on the last day of the cruise.

Triumph drydock relocation

UNDER its own power, Carnival Cruise Lines’ infamous Triumph vessel will leave its drydock in Mobile, Alabama tomorrow, to head for further repairs in the Bahamas. New systems to enhance operating reliability will be installed as part of a $700m fleet-wide upgrade program (CW 18 Apr) which includes fire suppression systems and emergency hotel backup power to ensure facilities continue to work if main power generators are disabled. Triumph will return to commercial service with four and five-night cruises to Mexico starting from 13 June.

Asia open and ready to cruise

STAR Cruises is again promoting five of the most popular short cruise voyages around some of the most exciting Asian ports including Penang, Phuket and Langkawi. Cruises start from $99 per day and include accommodation onboard, all meals and onboard entertainment - see page 5 for details.

Cruise Calendar

**Sydney**
- Pacific Jewel: Fri 17 May
- Carnival Spirit: Sun 19 May
- Pacific Jewel: Mon 20 May
- Sea Princess: Mon 20 May

**Brisbane**
- Pacific Dawn: Sat 18 May

**Fremantle**
- Dawn Princess: Wed 15 May

**Darwin**
- Coral Princess: Thu 16 May

**The two Carnival Spirit passengers lost at sea were not the first Australians to go overboard.**

**THE tragedy of the young couple who went overboard while cruising near NSW last week has highlighted the importance of safety and security on cruise ships in local waters.** Although the majority of ‘man overboard’ incidents involve Americans in the US, Mexico, Bahamas and Caribbean, there have been several other cases in the South Pacific. According to Ann Sherry, two passengers have previously disappeared overboard from cruise ships in the region in the six years that she has been CEO of Carnival Australia.

In 2005, a man also died after jumping from P&O’s Pacific Sky sailing near Caloundra, Queensland.

On two other South Pacific cruises, passengers who jumped were rescued.

Last year, a man was also saved after jumping from Carnival Spirit on the way to Hawaii, according to a report by NBC in the US. A spokesperson for Carnival Cruise Lines said last week’s shocking incident was the first such case for the Spirit in Australia.

“The safety and security of our guests and crew is the number one priority at Carnival Cruise Lines,” CCL Australia’s director, Jennifer Vandekreeke, told Cruise Weekly.

“All of our ships meet or exceed International Maritime standards, particularly with regards to items critical to guest safety such as balcony railings.”

The Spirit has more than 20 security staff, although only four people are monitoring the 600 CCTV cameras, Sherry told the media last week.

In mandatory safety briefings, passengers are also urged to immediately report to crew any cases of people falling or jumping overboard.

Only a few hours before the young couple were discovered to be missing last week, CCL had announced the deployment of a second ship to Sydney.

Carnival Legend is now scheduled to join Spirit next year for a series of cruises to New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji, commencing 24 September 2014.

The 2,124-passenger ship will be withdrawn from Europe, along with Carnival Sunshine (to be based in New Orleans), leaving no Carnival ships in Europe in 2014.

The company revealed last week that it was pulling out of the European market due to US clients’ reluctance to pay for expensive transatlantic flights.

No further details have since been disclosed about local plans for Carnival Legend.

**TODAY, Cruise Weekly’s guest expert, Adam Armstrong**
Free Scenic information night
A SERIES of free information sessions are being run by Scenic Tours aimed at answering any questions and providing information on the company’s European river cruise itineraries on the back of the 2014 brochure launch.

The info nights will also touch on the fleet of ‘Space Ships’, which as of next year is currently set to reach nine.

Events will be held in Newcastle, Sydney, Central Coast, Canberra, Parramatta, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Mackay, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast and are open to members of the public and the trade.

Pre-bookings are essential for the sessions, which are free to attend - phone 1300 723 642 or see www.bit.ly/infosess to register.

Norwegian light up rainy NYC
THE 4,000 passenger Norwegian Breakaway, to be operated by Norwegian Cruise Lines was officially christened late last week in a wet New York City, with ceremonies capped off by a chorus line by the city’s famous Rockettes. Breakaway is the largest vessel to be based in New York City year-round.

Hapag-Lloyd takes the wraps off the new Europa 2
AT 225.3 metres in length and 42,830 tonnes, she is far from the longest and a long way off the largest cruise ship operating in European waters, however it is the inside of Hapag-Lloyd’s new MS Europa 2 that gets the tongues wagging.

Officially christened in a ceremony in the German port of Hamburg late last week, Europa 2 launches another salvo in the never ending battle for supremacy in the onboard luxury stakes.

In all, 251 suites are divided up by categories ranging from Owners Suites down to Verandah Suites - that’s right, every single cabin has a private balcony with expansive ocean views.

The vessel will be operating mostly 7-14 day cruises in the east and west Mediterranean before heading for the Arabian Peninsula and into Asia towards the end of this year and early next.

After its Hamburg christening last Friday, Europa 2 is currently operating its maiden voyage, which departed from the German city on Saturday, bound for Lisbon in Portugal, via Amsterdam, Belgium, France and Spain before heading around the western coast of Portugal and arriving in Lisbon on Saturday 25 May, with journeys between ports clearly labelled as “Relaxation at Sea”, highlighting the serene nature observed onboard.

State of the art technology has been installed around a stylish interior, with the company claiming that cruise rituals take a back seat to lifestyle and an informal onboard standard, with maritime traditions such as the Captain’s Dinner done away with.

Individual wellness and fitness options & variations in entertainment to suit all tastes are among the highlights of the new company flagship, which also boasts a wide variety of culinary offerings across eight restaurants and six bars to keep fussy diners satisfied.

Crew numbers easily surpass one for every two passengers, ensuring high standards of attentiveness and service are maintained throughout the voyage.

For more photos of the interior of the vessel, head to the Cruise Weekly Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cruiseweekly and for more info - see www.hl-cruises.com.

HAL onboard tech workshops
HOLLAND America Line has renewed a technology partnership with Microsoft and will continue to offer its computer and digital camera education sessions to passengers.

The new agreement will see Windows 8 software, material and hardware added to the company’s 15 ships across the fleet.

Bring your friends for credits
CRYSTAL Cruises has launched a new “Bonus Share the Experience” social networking referral rewards program, offering up to $1600pp in onboard credit to cruisers who encourage their friends to book a room as well. On special selected voyages, past passengers of the line who encourage their first-time cruising friends to book a stateroom on the same voyage as them will receive $400 for each friend they bring, up to a $1600 cap. The friends referred also receive a $400 bonus onboard credit each, up to an $800 cap. Eligible cruises operate between Oct 17 and Feb 22 2014 and must be booked by 28 June, sailing on Crystal Serenity & Crystal Symphony. See www.bit.ly/crystalcredit for details.

Did You Know?
Captain Cook Cruises
♦ There are 45 different nationalities of employees working for Captain Cook Cruises.
♦ In 2012, Captain Cook Cruises Sydney served:
  • 15,600kg of prawns
  • In excess of 300,000 cups of coffee
  • 7,800 lobsters
  • 54,600 salmon portions
  • 54,600 lamingtons
♦ Hugh Jackman worked as a Kitchen Hand for Captain Cook Cruises on the John Cadman II in the early 80’s.
♦ Three employees have worked for Captain Cook Cruises that have the same name as the stars - Peter Allen, Jimmy Stewart and Eddie Murphy.
♦ The combined horsepower of the engines used on Captain Cook Cruises boats on Sydney Harbour is 16,000. 
♦ 324 different nationalities were carried across our cruises in 2012.

Website: www.cruiseweekly.com.au | Phone: 1300 799 220 | Fax: 1300 799 221 | Email: info@cruiseweekly.com.au
More than half off the Queens

CRUISES aboard Queen Mary 2, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth departing in 2014 have been cut in price by as much as 55% in a new sale from cruising retailer Cruiseabout.

Eligible voyages in the sale include a full circumnavigation of Australia on QM2, priced from $56899ppts ex Sydney on 19 Feb 2014. Bookings are open until 30 Jun, and for more cruise options or to book, phone 1300 450 133.

River cruises remain popular

AVALON Waterways managing director Patrick Clark had echoed comments by Viking chairman Torstein Hagen earlier this year, saying the boom currently being enjoyed by river cruising is showing no signs of slowing.

“The entire river cruise market to Europe is 500,000 people (a year) as opposed to 15 million taking ocean cruises, and there is a high level of interest from that 15 million in river cruises,” Clark told USA Today last week.

Clark said at last week’s christening of Avalon Expression (CW Thu), that the market had plenty of room to grow, was capable of sustaining more ships and added that markets such as Australia, USA and Canada had more than 100m that fit key demographics.

Get your gorge on with Orion

ORION Expedition Cruises has scheduled a seven-night Tasman Discoverer gourmet food and wine themed cruise, departing Brisbane on 13 December, bound for New Zealand.

Food workshops, wine tastings and gourmet meals will be enjoyed onboard, with specialist wine and cheese experts also on hand.

Cabins for the week-long voyage across the Tasman via Norfolk Island start from $3,215ppts - call 1300 361 012 for bookings.

Grandeur to base in Maryland

ROYAL Caribbean International has deployed its newly revitalised Grandeur of the Seas liner to again be based in Baltimore, Maryland.

Following a top-to-toe renovation and upgrade, Grandeur will resume operating 6-10 night Bermuda & Bahamas cruises from the east-coast port, replacing Enchantment of the Seas, who filled the gap in the interim.

Grandeur of the Seas was based in Baltimore from 2004 to 2009 before its upgrade.

Port Review: Copenhagen, Denmark

By Cruise Sales Manager, Roger Condon

EVERY year, more Aussies are heading to Northern Europe to cruise, and many begin or end their voyage in wonderful Copenhagen. For most cruise travellers, Copenhagen is the jumping off point for an incredible Baltic Sea extravaganza, visiting Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Poland, Germany and Sweden. Some cruises may begin and end elsewhere and include Copenhagen as a highlighted port of call.

Where your ship docks in Copenhagen is very convenient. There are two possible locations and the best is Langelinie Pier. It is reasonably close to downtown Copenhagen and if you’re a walker, I highly recommend you take the stroll into town, which takes about ½ an hour, but because it passes many places of interest, it could take you much longer. Right on the pier you’ll easily find taxis, which are efficient and affordable, plus just a few steps across the road are several shops for souvenirs and an information bureau. The Hop-on Hop-off Explorer bus, which is great way to see the major sights, also stops here.

Walking into town is flat and simply awesome. Map in hand you can effortlessly plan a route to take you right by the famous Little Mermaid. For many, their final walking destination is Stroget, the long pedestrian shopping precinct of Copenhagen offering touristy shops, a wealth of designer boutiques and numerous places to eat. However, plan carefully, as this city dating back to 1043 CE, is full of historic sites and museums and your stroll could end up taking hours, with highlights such as Amalienborg Palace (home of the Royal Family), Rosenborg Castle, Botanic Gardens, Nyhavn (for lively harbourside dining), the Natural History Museum, National Museum and National Gallery of Denmark.

All of this is before you’ve even considered colourful Tivoli Gardens, the Viking Ship Museum, the interesting Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (art museum), or Kronborg and Frederiksborg Castles outside of town. Not everyone’s cup of tea would be a visit to Copenhagen’s freetown of Christiania, a controversial area that is unlike any other district in the city. Read up on it before you decide to visit. Stroget is where most shoppers end up and you could easily spend hours here on one of Europe’s longest pedestrian streets lined with cafes to people-watch.

Roger’s Quick Tips

Best Months: June - August

Don’t Miss: Tivoli Gardens Classical Music Festival

Tour or Not: On your own in town, but tour further afield

Sightseeing: Stroll or use the City Sightseeing Explorer Bus

Food: smørrebrød (Danish sandwich), Real Danish pastries

Language: Danish

Currency: Danish Krone

Shopping: Anything Danish design - furniture, jewellery

Cash or Card: Credit Card and Danish Krone

By Roger Condon, cruise sales manager, Discover the World Marketing - with 15 years at sea.
The heart and soul of entertainment at sea is the cruise ship singer, from the piano man to the cast members of theatre productions. But what is it like for the performers, living onboard and singing the same songs for months?

Kyle Pressley, a tenor from the Silver Shadow ensemble known as the Artists of Silversea, is on his second contract with the luxury line. Raised in Texas and based in New York, he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Oklahoma and performed with the Dallas Shakespeare Company and New York’s Sanguine Theater Company.

But for eight months this year, his Silversea schedule demands singing seven days a week in the ship’s Athenian Lounge. The program includes opera, Broadway, Beatles, Abba and Motown shows, with no days off.

However, a singer’s workload is light compared to other crew, such as waiters and bartenders, and allows plenty of free time. A typical day involves getting up at 10am, then going on shore excursions or exploring the port’s city or beach, possibly followed by an onboard duty such as hosting golf-putting for half an hour, before rehearsals at 8.15pm and the 45-minute shows.

Then there are the short performances at the ship’s cocktail parties and welcome events. “Sometimes it stretches me as a performer, but we get to see the world and have a good time,” said Kyle. “I’ve been to places I never thought I’d see, like the pyramids in Egypt, Venice, Rome.”

Singing on a cruise ship has its differences, mostly positive, he said. “Everybody wants to be part of it, to meet you & socialise with you. You get out in the audience, sing to the women, and sometimes they get on stage with you.”

The negative is “trying not to go crazy stuck on a ship” for so long. “I go to the gym, use the internet to keep in touch with people at home, and of course, you always have to find a lady friend here or there,” Kyle said.

However, the friendships with other cast members and the “great community atmosphere” in the crew areas are worth the sacrifices made.

The financial stability is also very attractive, with Silversea’s singers earning three times what Kyle earned in regional theatre in the US. “With my accommodation and food provided, I’m saving money, so I feel very lucky to have this job.”

“I love entertaining people, giving them a good experience,” he said. He’s also learned how to dance in platform shoes in the Abba show. “That taught me a lot of respect for women,” he laughed.

Ultimately, the 26-year-old would like to make it big on Broadway. His dream role? Billy Bigelow in a revival of ‘Carousel’.

To see Kyle perform with the other Artists of Silversea (Jonathan Shade, Jovani McCleary, Wendee Bressee, Anastasia Lange and Kashena Simpson), book yourself a Silver Shadow cruise online at www.silversea.com or call 1300 366 872.
 CONDITIONS APPLY: All prices are cruise only, AUD, per person twins share and subject to change and availability. Prices based on following cabin categories; Inside Cabin DC, Window Cabin CC & Balcony Cabin BC. Single passengers must pay a single supplement. Pricing correct as at 19 Apr 2013. Pricing & bonus credit valid until 30 June 2013 & can be withdrawn at any time without notice. Price includes port charges and fuel surcharge. Not applicable on Peak Sailings Dates; 22 Dec 2013 - 01 Jan 2014. Meals included in selected restaurants. Strict cancellation fees apply. Balcony Class Food & Beverage Credit is per cabin & amounts are as follows: 3 nights = SGD$300, 5 nights = SGD$400. Balcony Class is applicable only when you book a Balcony Cabin. Please note that a surcharge may be imposed on credit card transactions. A service fee will be charged. Every effort is made to ensure advertisement accuracy, however Star Cruises cannot be held responsible for printing or typographical errors or errors arising from unforeseen circumstances. SCSSVA220413

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5 night Cruise from Singapore

Selected Departures from 6 Oct 2013 to 23 Mar 2014

- Inside from $500 pp
- Window from $1000 pp
- Balcony from $1500 pp

All Meals*, Entertainment, Port Taxes & Fuel Surcharges Are Included. For Further Information & Bookings Please Contact Your Preferred Travel Agent.

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