

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 18 Dec 2014

Brief drydock for CW

TODAY is the final edition of *Cruise Weekly* for 2014 as we all head off for the Christmas break.

But fear not, we'll be back in 2015, continuing to keep you informed of all the biggest stories and breaking news shaping the Australian cruise industry.

We'd like to wish all our readers a happy, healthy, safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you on Tue 06 Jan 2015.

Scenic launches onto Douro

SCENIC Tours will expand its European river route network from Apr 2016, announcing it will debut on the Douro River in Portugal with a custom-built ship.

To be named *Scenic Azure*, the "next generation of river cruisers" will be a slightly downsized 'Space Ship' concept at 80 metres long.

Offering 48 cabins, the ship will cater to 96 at double occupancy.

An 11-day round-trip itinerary will be operated by *Scenic Azure*, travelling from World Heritage-listed Porto to Vega de Terron.

Passengers will enjoy the same five-star experience as provided on 'Space Ships', Scenic Tours said, with private butler service, unlimited beverages and mini-bar, local guides, *Scenic FreeChoice* activities and *Scenic Enrich* events.

Itineraries will couple with other Scenic Tours river cruises in the Bordeaux and Seine regions of France as well as extension tours in Lisbon & from Porto to Madrid.

Scenic Tours general manager product Aleisha Fittler expressed her delight at adding the new river product to the Scenic range.

"Behind the undulating hillside curves of the beautiful Douro Valley through years of research, we have uncovered some extraordinary and diverse experiences for our guests which we can't wait to share."

Expansion onto the Douro was foretold exclusively to *Cruise Weekly* back in Apr this year by founder and managing director Glen Moroney (*CW* 17 Apr).

Holiday role reversal

MEN are bigger spenders while on holiday than women, according to the inaugural Princess Cruises Holiday Shopping Study.

The unbelievable statistic was based on 1,000 people surveyed.

Men were also found to be more generous than their fairer companions, with 27% saying they bought a present for their partner while on holiday, while only 7% of women said the same.

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Carnival recruits Duffy

CURRENT CLIA president and ceo Christine Duffy will depart the organisation to take up a role as president of Carnival Cruise Lines, it has been announced.

The shock management move sees Duffy replace outgoing CCL president Gerry Cahill, who departed the line last month.

Duffy will commence on 01 Feb, reporting directly to Carnival Corp chief executive Arnold Donald.

It is unclear yet whether Duffy's new role will impact her keynote role at Cruise3sixty Australasia.

Azamara opens 2017

AZAMARA Club Cruises will return to Australia in 2017 for a second season down-under, with new itineraries unveiled as part of the release of its 2017 voyages.

Unlike the line's maiden season in Australia in early 2016, this time it will be *Azamara Journey* making the trip for 2017.

Among the voyages to operate will be an 18-night northbound cruise from Sydney to Singapore departing on 22 Mar 2017, visiting the Whitsundays, Darwin and Indonesia prior to Singapore.

Other highlights of the season will see ships operate along the US West Coast, Croatia's Inside Passage, Normandy, Holland and Germany and a special sailing to the Monaco Formula 1 GP.

Bookings have now opened for Azamara's 2017 global schedule.

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Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest news from the cruise industry.

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Expedia set for cruise growth

ONLINE travel giant Expedia wants to be the “biggest seller of cruise product in Australia,” according to the company’s senior vice president of global tour & transport Greg Schultze.

Speaking to **CW** in Las Vegas last week at the 15th annual Expedia Partners Conference, Schultze said the company is “definitely focused on Australia for cruise expansion”.

Currently the local Expedia cruise offering, which debuted

just over a year ago (**TD** 21 Aug 2013) is operated by a third party.

The Expedia conference saw around 3,700 suppliers gather for updates about the technology firm’s initiatives, and while many were hoteliers, there was also a strong cruise contingent with Carnival Corporation’s World’s Leading Cruise Lines being one of the conference sponsors.

In North America, the company also operates a network of Expedia Cruise Center retail outlets, while the online cruise offering is now on Expedia’s newest platform which will allow the launch of combined air-cruise packages in “just a few months,” Schultze said.

Biggest Princess sale

FIVE booking incentives are on the table to entice cruisers to take part in a year of celebrations for Princess Cruises in 2015 as it marks its 50th anniversary.

The line has launched its “Biggest Sale Ever”, valid on select departures from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne & Fremantle setting sail between Apr-Nov next year.

Two seven-night voyages from Anchorage to Vancouver on *Star Princess* and Rome to Barcelona on *Emerald Princess* are also eligible to book in the new sale.

Passengers can enjoy up to \$500 off staterooms, up to \$200 onboard credit per room, dinner for two in one of the speciality restaurants, reduced deposits or savings of up to 50% on triple or quad reservations - bookings must be made by 28 Feb 2015.

Solar eclipse sailing

KIMBERLEY cruise operator Coral Princess Cruises is offering a special expedition to Indonesia to coincide with the next full solar eclipse, slated for 09 Mar 2016.

Two itineraries incorporating the eclipse are on offer - a 24-night New Guinea Circle departing from Alotau, PNG on 23 Feb 2016 and a shorter 14-night Wewak to Darwin sailing departing 04 Mar.

Following the company’s sold out solar eclipse voyage from Cairns in 2012, the sailing will see *Oceanic Discoverer* positioned at Pulau Jiew to maximise viewing.

An Escape for all ages

ACTIVITIES and entertainment will be aimed at all age groups on Norwegian Cruise Line’s newest vessel Norwegian Escape when it makes its debut in Nov next year.

The line yesterday unveiled a suite of onboard fun including a three-storey ropes course with 99 different challenges to navigate including planks, sky rails and ziplines including one which will take cruisers over the ship’s side.

This will be complemented by Aqua Park, which NCL says will be the largest water park at sea with four water slides, a dedicated kids zone, two pools and four hot tubs

For younger cruisers there’s a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles mini golf course, a nursery for babies and Nickelodeon entertainment.



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Peter Kollar
CLIA Australasia

Best of both worlds

OUR role in organizing holiday experiences for clients is all about recommending the best options for the time and budget our clients have available, along with suggestions that would best suit their motives and needs.

Much of the time this means it isn’t just about the cruise segment; often it is the additions of pre or post cruise holidaying.

Late last month I had the opportunity to experience first hand a product that has evolved its servicing to complement the cruise experience and it comes from a seemingly unlikely source - rail!

Great Southern Rail (GSR) joined CLIA last year as an Executive Member to showcase how serious they are in working with the cruise community. My time on the Ghan from Adelaide to Darwin was nothing short of exceptional.

Commonalities such as enjoying gourmet meals as part of the experience, to “free” land excursions in the outback as part of their Gold Service product, the rail experience matched well with that which would have been experienced on the ocean.

Panoramic carriages dedicated to social chatter with rusty desert landscapes passing by, all with complimentary drinks in hand meant the small community feel onboard was similar to what you would experience on one of the small boutique ships visiting our shores.

So next time you have a client that has a few days up their sleeve, why not diversify their holiday experience with the best of both worlds.



Carnival team join Santa’s elves



FOR the second year running, the team at Carnival Cruise Lines dug deep in the season of giving to spread some Christmas cheer for young people in foster care.

Getting into the Christmas spirit, the team joined with the CREATE Foundation to treat 50 young people in foster homes to a Christmas celebration onboard *Carnival Legend* in Sydney.

The party saw children receive a visit from Santa, a bountiful lunch onboard and an afternoon to enjoy Carnival WaterWorks with many rides on Green Thunder.

CREATE Foundation works to further improve the lives of

children and young people living in out-of-home care, kinship or residential care.

“It was a real thrill for us to put smiles on so many deserving faces,” Carnival Cruise Lines vice-president Australia Jennifer Vandekreeke said.

The CCL team is **pictured** above at the event, back row from left is Athena Mok, CCL; Kristen Versitano, CCL; Jo Kirkwood, CREATE; Jennifer Vandekreeke, CCL and Denise Minakowski, CCL.

Front row: Kobe Butcher, CREATE; Lance Dye, CCL; Anton Loeb, CCL; Daniel Bringas, CCL and Sabrina Tande, CREATE.

OzFocus show off the Apple Isle



DOMESTIC tourism advocacy group OzFocus continues to grow, with more and more home-grown Australian products, suppliers and experiences keen to showcase their wares to Australian agents.

Melbourne agents were the latest group invited to participate in an event, meet suppliers and learn more about the variety of product in their own backyard.

The event took place onboard the *Spirit of Tasmania* while docked in the Port of Melbourne.

After enjoying some Tasmanian cheese, wine and treats onshore, the group boarded to have a look at the onboard accommodations and features passengers enjoy during the Bass Strait crossing.

New Canaveral ports

DISCUSSIONS are underway between Florida's Canaveral Port Authority and cruise lines as the port seeks commitments to justify the building of as many as three brand new cruise ship terminals.

Further, renovations to existing facilities to handle ever-growing ships could also be undertaken.

Cruise forecasts by the facility show the port will need a new terminal in 2016, another by 2018 and a third before 2022.

Management say firm decisions will be made in coming months.

Suppliers on hand at the event included *Spirit of Tasmania*, Europcar, Parker Travel Collection, Sunlover, Pan Pacific Hotels, StayWell, Sealink, Captain Cook Cruises, The Kimberley Collection, Excite Holidays, Great Southern Rail, Tas Villas, Delaware North, Cable Beach Resort, Driveaway Holidays and Voyages.

The attending agents & suppliers are **pictured** above at the ferry's Melbourne terminal.

Cuba back in season

CHARTERED Celestyal Cruises vessel *Cristal* has returned to Cuba for a second season offering circumnavigations of the island nation for Cuba Cruises.

The season's maiden seven-day sailing will depart from Montego Bay on 19 Dec, visiting six major and lesser known ports in Cuba.

Hurtigruten far north

POLAR expedition operator Hurtigruten will sail in spring 2016 to 80° North - the northernmost point of mainland Europe - with two new itineraries scheduled to depart on 25 Apr & 04 May 2016.

The ten-day voyages will depart from Tromsø, visiting Spitsbergen & the North Cape to see newborn polar wildlife - call Discover the World on 1800 623 267 for details.



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RCCL buys Brilliance

ROYAL Caribbean has ended a long-term lease of the cruise ship operating as *Brilliance of the Seas* and instead purchased it outright from its UK owners HBOS Group.

Using a revolving credit facility that was recently upsized, RCCL paid US\$275m for the fourteen year-old ship, ending a 25-year charter signed in Jul 2002 eleven years ahead of schedule.

RCI has been the only company to operate the ship since it was built, the line said in a statement.

Insignia delays return

OCEANIA Cruises has cancelled its next departure of *Insignia* - a 24-day Caribbean voyage - as it continues to investigate an engine room fire which claimed the lives of one crew & three contractors.

Scheduled to depart yesterday, the line said it needed "additional time to conduct a full analysis".

An Oceania spokesman said the line would share more details as they become known.

According to Oceania's website, the next scheduled departure for *Insignia* is set for 10 Jan ex Miami.

Passengers on the cancelled voyage can rebook or receive a refund, plus a 25% future credit.

Britannia breezes trial

FORTHCOMING P&O Cruises World Cruising flagship *Britannia* has reportedly "cruised" through its sea trials around the Gulf of Trieste in the Adriatic Sea ahead of its christening on 10 Mar.

The vessel last week undertook tests on its propulsion, steering and stability, carried out by its Fincantieri shipbuilders.

In its first season, *Britannia* will operate from Southampton to the Mediterranean, Norwegian Fjords and around the British Isles.

MSC shifting its ships

STRONG demand for cruises in the Eastern Mediterranean has seen MSC Cruises move to deploy two additional ships in the region between May and Nov next year.

MSC Poesia and *MSC Magnifica* will join *MSC Preziosa* departing from Venice, sailing to ports in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Croatia.



FLYING drones appear to be the way for aerial photography to be captured these days, which in turn is leading to the spawning of social media networks for drone photos.

One such not-so-originally named network 'Dronestagram' was on assignment for the *BBC* in the UK, compiling the best drone-shot images of the year for a special gallery.

Knowing they couldn't go past the awe-inspiring sight of Sydney Harbour in the morning, the team scoured the best and happened to locate one featuring Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Spirit* in dock at Circular Quay (**pictured** below).

Images that also made the cut were taken in India, French Polynesia, Pakistan, Barcelona, Pisa, Niagara Falls and more.

To check out the entire gallery of stunning images from Dronestagram, **CLICK HERE**.



Cruise Weekly is Australia's leading travel industry cruise publication. An industry-focused PDF edition of *Cruise Weekly* is published every Tue and Thu, and there's also a consumer-facing email newsletter published each Wed - sign up free at www.cruiseweekly.com.au.

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