



Seabourn ship signed

OFFICIAL contracts have been signed between luxury cruise line Seabourn and Italian ship builder Fincantieri for the all-suite vessel announced last year (**CW** 22 Oct).

Further details of the ship have also been revealed, with carriage for 604 guests on a twin-share basis, larger than any other craft currently in its fleet.

The design of the un-named vessel will be similar to Odyssey class ships in service at present, but will feature an additional deck, expanded public areas and a guest to staff ratio of nearly 1:1.

Each suite will also offer a personal verandah.

"The new ship will continue the evolution that began with Seabourn's fleet expansion, adding modern design elements and innovations consistent with Seabourn's reputation for understated elegance," the line's president Richard Meadows said.

Empress buy finalised

AMERICAN Queen Steamboat Company has finalised the purchase for its second vessel - the 223-pax *American Empress*.

The line's newest vessel offers seven stateroom categories over five decks and will be deployed to operate on the Columbia and Snake Rivers from 05 Apr.

Empress' maiden voyage will be a nine-day sailing visiting Astoria, Oregon & Clarkston, Washington.

CLIA 2013 Awards finalists

TWO new hosts, a new venue, new sponsors and an official after-party are among the big changes in store for next month's sold-out Cruise Industry Awards.

Cruise Lines International Association Australasia has also revealed the agencies and consultants from across Australia and New Zealand who have been shortlisted for the six award categories.

Nominated for Cruise Agency of the Year - Australia is Bicton Travel, Perth; Clean Cruising, Brisbane; Cruise Express, Balmain; Our Vacation Centre, Helensvale and Ozcruising from Philip, ACT.

Agents in with a shot at taking out the prestigious Cruise Consultant of the Year - Australia gong on the night will be Alana Freeman-Gibbs of Ozcruising, ACT; Mary Kelly from Cruiseabout Concord, NSW; Deborah Long from Weston Cruise & Travel, ACT; Lance Mumby, Cruise Express in Balmain, NSW and Philip Smethurst from Bicton Travel, WA.

To be held on 08 Feb at Sydney's Doltone House on Hyde Park, the event will have a new MC, host of Channel 7's 'AFL Game Day' Hamish McLachlan, assisted by actress Melanie Vallejo, best known for her role as Sophie Wong in 'Winners & Losers'.

The first-ever after-party (sponsored by CLIA executive partner and online travel

technology specialist TravelTek) will follow the awards dinner.

Emirates also comes on board as the event's platinum sponsor.

Other major sponsors include Carnival Australia and Royal Caribbean (gold), Avalon Waterways, Tauck River Cruising, Cruise Passenger magazine and Cruise Baltic (silver).

Participants can tweet on the night using @CLIAAustralasia and #CruiseAwards13.

CLIA Australasia gm Brett Jardine said: "All the finalists played an important part in making 2013 a prosperous year for cruising down under and these awards are a great way for the cruise industry to applaud their efforts."

For the full list of 2013 finalists, **CLICK HERE**.

Brekkie on the Jewel

POPULAR Channel 7 breakfast program *Sunrise* will next week emanate from the decks of the P&O Cruises vessel *Pacific Jewel* in a four-hour show from 6am on the Australia Day public holiday.

The broadcast will mark the first time an Australian breakfast TV show has been broadcast entirely from a cruise ship while at sea.

All five main presenters - Kochie, Sam, Nat, Beretts and Edwina - will be on hand for the broadcast, taking place off the NSW coast.

Regular segments will take place as normal, including the Cash Cow, while weather presenter Edwina Bartholomew will try the ship's new P&O Edge adventure playground at sea.

"We are thrilled to be working with the *Sunrise* team on what we believe to be a world first and know the passengers and crew onboard *Pacific Jewel's* Australia Day cruise will be very excited to be part of Australian cruise and television history," P&O Cruises senior vp Tammy Marshall said.

CCC Fiji sales strong

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji has reported excellent booking rates from its annual sale, which kicked off on Boxing Day and continues through to 31 Mar.

This year is seeing the line offer seven nights for the price of four on all week-long itineraries including Yasawa Island and Northern Discovery Cruises.

CCC Fiji joint managing director Jackie Charlton said the promotion had again been popular and well received among travel agents.

"May, Jul and Sep/Oct are the months that seem to be the most popular although we have seen some bookings for most months," Charlton said, adding cabins were also selling fast on departures prior to 15 Mar.



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CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Sth Pac Cruising

ASK a client to describe their ideal holiday and it's likely their vision will involve soft white sandy beaches, palm trees and cocktails – all of which can be found whilst cruising through the islands of the South Pacific. Located conveniently close enough to give travellers a short break or a longer tropical holiday, the South Pacific is renowned for its languid, laid-back lifestyle.

There's no question that we're blessed to have so many unspoilt islands on our doorstep. Little wonder that the South Pacific is the most popular cruise destination for Aussies and Kiwis.

The beauty of the South Pacific's many cruise ports is that each has its own unique personality and attractions – from the pristine white beaches of Ouvea in the Loyalty Islands to the friendly bustle of Fiji's Port Denarau and the French flavour of Noumea.

A wide variety of cruises to the South Pacific are available year-round from Australian east coast ports and during the summer months on visiting international ships, making it incredibly easy to plan a tropical family getaway or a romantic escape from your home port.

For 1st time cruisers, a taste of the South Pacific will often lead to a 2nd (and 3rd) sale as they then become a "repeat passenger"!



Travel Indochina push cruise

TRAVEL Indochina has boosted its product in the Asian river cruise market, releasing its first exclusive charters in India and Myanmar along with additional cruises in China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

The company has secured full-ship charters of the *Ganges Voyager*, tipped to be the most luxurious ship ever in the region, launching next year, and the similarly designed 56-passenger *Irrawaddy Explorer*, which debuts in Sep this year.

On the Mekong, it will have exclusive use of the *The Jahan* for a 28 Aug 2014 departure.

Paul Hole, managing director of Travel Indochina, said the company delayed a strong entry into river cruising until it had secured boutique vessels in destinations that reflected its approach to small-group travel.

"Our recent decision to lead the way with these more innovative itineraries in Burma and India has been in part also driven by our travellers, who are looking for more of the sort of holiday experience only this type of

boutique cruising can provide," he told *TD Cruise Update*.

Travel Indochina first produced an Asian river cruising brochure in 2011, while the new Exclusive Charter Cruise brochure will be launched at the end of this month.

For exclusive charters, Travel Indochina offers a Western cruise director, 100% guaranteed departures, all meals and drinks (house wine and beer) while cruising, and onboard entertainment and lectures.

The exclusive 14-night 'Ganges Discovery Voyage', departing 17 Feb 2015, includes a seven-night cruise plus land touring of Kolkata, Varanasi, Delhi, Agra and Jaipur – priced from \$6,887ppts.

The 11-night 'Treasures of Golden Burma', departing 22 Nov 2014 and 6 Jan 2015, from Mandalay to Yangon, is priced from \$4,487ppts.

Airfare deals, offering up to \$1,000 air credit per couple or 2-for-1, are available for select bookings prior to 31 Mar 2014.

Contact on 1300 362 777 or travindo@travelindochina.com.au.

Tennis cruise a smash

MORE than 1,800 tennis-loving cruise passengers arrived in Melbourne yesterday aboard the inaugural Australian Open Tennis Cruise operated by P&O Cruises.

Sailing aboard *Pacific Pearl*, the departure included general admission into the Melbourne Park facility, however more than half opted to upgrade to reserved seats in Rod Laver Arena.

"As one of the nation's most popular sporting events, the Australian Open was an obvious addition to our P&O MainEvents cruise roster," P&O Cruises senior vp Tammy Marshall said.

While onboard, guests enjoyed the live broadcast of the action on a poolside screen as well as guest lectures from former Aussie professional player Bill Gilmour.

New perk on Crystal

SIXTY minutes free wi-fi internet access per day will be available to all members of Crystal Cruises loyalty program Crystal Society.

The new feature will be available from 19 Sep on *Crystal Serenity* and 15 Oct for *Crystal Symphony*.

Full-fare paying passengers are made members of the club at the end of their first cruise.

Asia excursion menu

PANDAW River Expeditions has launched a customisable menu of excursion cruises on its Mekong River voyages.

The menu offers a selection of sights hand-picked by a local expert including a visit to a school, wildlife rescue centre or traditional cooking classes.

DANII sailing to a cure

OVER 100 children with Type 1 Diabetes, parents, grandparents, siblings and friends have recently returned from the inaugural "Jelly Bean Cruise", an initiative of the Danni Meads-Barlow Foundation.

Sailing aboard *Celebrity Solstice*, the cruise allowed participants to make new contacts & share ideas on Type 1 Diabetes management.

The sailing included a Diabetes technology mini-fair, allowing suppliers of insulin pumps and glucose monitors to interact and speak informally with patients.

MEANWHILE, registrations are now open for the 3rd annual Jelly Bean Ball fundraiser for the Danni Meads-Barlow Foundation, taking place in 2014 at the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth Hotel on 14 Jun.

CLICK HERE for all the details.

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Love is in Tasmania

SPIRIT of Tasmania has released a Valentines Day romantic escape package priced at \$1,790 for two. The offer includes a one-way trip on 14 Feb with deluxe cabin accommodation, valet parking & carriage of one vehicle, wine and chocolate, a tour of the Captain's Bridge and a three-course meal. Phone 1800 996 603 for details.

Seabourn exclusives

CRUISE Traveller has released two holiday packages featuring an exclusive six-star voyage aboard two Seabourn vessels. Departing Santiago, a 28-night package departs on 18 Dec 2014 and incorporates a cruise to a series of highlights in Antarctica aboard *Seabourn Quest*, priced from \$22,499ppts. The second option is a 34-night trip from Cape Town to Singapore on *Seabourn Sojourn* taking in a number of Indian Ocean islands and priced from \$18,499ppts.

Norovirus on Majesty

APPROX 66 passengers and two crew aboard Royal Caribbean International's *Majesty of the Seas* were affected by the norovirus gastrointestinal illness during a recent four-night sailing to the Caribbean, the line said. The vessel visited the Bahamas and Key West, Florida as part of the voyage. RCI said most of those affected responded positively to over-the-counter medication provided onboard, with the ship to be thoroughly cleaned to prevent a repeat of the highly-contagious outbreak on upcoming sailings.

P&O reveal new cruise ship livery



EIGHT ships in the P&O Cruises World Cruising fleet are set to be repainted in a new colour scheme featuring the Union Jack. Funnels of the ship will also be painted bright blue, which will also feature a rising sun decal. The colour change is aimed at reflecting the distinctly British heritage of the line, with *Aurora* to become the first ship kitted out in the new colours later this year. Following *Aurora*, the livery will next be seen on *Brittania*, the line's brand new ship and the largest vessel to be operating

Benoa growth target

THE operator of Bali's Benoa cruise terminal has set a target of welcoming 58 cruise ship visits for the full year in 2014. If successful, the target would mark a 41% increase compared to the 2013 result of 41 ships. "The potential of tourist visits via cruise ships to Bali, especially through the Benoa seaport, is still high - we have made the required preparations," PT Pelindo general manager Ali Sodikin told Indonesian news agency *Antara*.

exclusively for the British market. Britannia's paint work will feature the longest Union Jack in the world, at 94 metres in length. Extensive market research was conducted by P&O Cruises World Cruising to fine tune the make-up of the final paint scheme, with ceo David Dingle saying the new look will make the ships more recognisable worldwide as it enters its 177th year of operation. "The P&O Cruises' name will be emblazoned along their hulls and the Rising Sun, the enduring symbol of our heritage, will shine from their funnels," Dingle added. The new design is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

Travelmarvel E/Birds

SAVINGS of up to \$6,400 per couple are available on 'Fly Free' deals with Travelmarvel on bookings from its 2015 European River Cruise Preview brochure. Fly Free deals are valid on cruise holidays taken in Mar or between 29 Sep-31 Dec, booked by 15 Apr. Highlighted itineraries include the eight-day The Delightful Danube, priced from \$2,895ppts.

PORTHOLE

AN ARTIST specialising in seascapes has taken the art type to new depths...literally. Peruvian artist Pascual Mimbela has shown off a collection of paintings depicting coral reefs, boats, fish, waves and beaches - painted while he was underwater. Mimbela said it was always a dream of his to paint from under the sea to give him new perspectives of his inspiration. The painter takes everything a land-based artist would use into the water with him, from brushes, spatulas, oils, easels and canvas on which to paint. "I wanted to do something different. I wanted to see for myself, with my own eyes the depths of the sea," he said. The collection of seascapes created underwater have now gone on display in the town square of Los Organos in Peru.

New Azamara route

A NEW cruise route sponsored by the Costa Rica Tourism Board, known as the Mesoamerican Cruise Route, has departed for the first time by Azamara Club Cruises. The route departs from Puerto Caldera and allows travellers to navigate the Pacific coast of the country, through Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. Azamara operate a 14-night itinerary on the route aboard the *Azamara Quest*, with the cruise's destination being Los Angeles.

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