

### Four-day MSC sale

**MASSIVE** savings of up to 60% off normal brochured fares will be available next week with the return of MSC Cruises' popular 96-hour fare sale.

Sailings in the Mediterranean, Norwegian Fjords, Baltic Sea, West Indies, Caribbean as well as specially selected Grand Voyages will all be on sale, covering the line's fleet of 12 mega-liners.

Prices for a seven-night cruise in the Mediterranean ex Genoa will be priced from \$449pp for an inside cabin *MSC Splendida*.

The four-day event will begin at the same time nationwide - 9am AEDST on Tue 18 Mar and run until C.O.B on Fri 21 Mar at 6pm. See [www.msccruises.com.au](http://www.msccruises.com.au).

### Genting eyes a sell-off

**ASIAN** investment firm Genting Hong Kong Ltd has told the Singapore Stock Exchange it plans to sell its entire remaining stake in Norwegian Cruise Lines.

At a minimum US\$19 per share, the firm aims to gain \$1.23 billion.

Genting chairman Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay said the reason behind the sell-off is to "unlock the value of its NCLH investment".

### Face to Face in CU!

Today's issue of *TD Cruise Update* features two pages of all the latest cruise information, plus a **Face to Face** interview.

## Green eggs & ham in Aus

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Lines will bring its new Dr Seuss entertainment experience to both of its Sydney-based ships in a move set to transform its children's programs.

*Carnival Legend* is due to arrive in Australia this year with Dr Seuss onboard, while *Carnival Spirit* will get it "sometime in 2015", the company said.

The exclusive partnership with Dr Seuss Enterprises will be rolled out across the line's fleet

### RCI connectivity boost

**ROYAL** Caribbean Cruise Lines has adopted a new advanced VSAT satellite bandwidth system developed by Harris CapRock Communications, deploying the technology on its entire fleet.

Dubbed Pulse, the new system is aimed at improving connectivity to offshore and deepwater customers, such as cruise ships.

Pulse works to dynamically facilitate real-time bandwidth upgrades by reassigning satellite capacity on demand, negating the need for dedicated bandwidth.

**MEANWHILE**, Royal Caribbean will launch the 2014 edition of its week-long Royal Flush sale event next week, on from 16-22 Mar.

Cruise fares from \$999pp will be on offer, with bonuses of cabin upgrades, half-price deposits and onboard credits available on selected sailings across the range.

of 24 ships, starting with *Carnival Splendor*, which introduced the youth, family, dining and entertainment program this week.

The immersive experience includes the iconic Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast with the Cat in the Hat and Friends in the main dining room (for an extra fee), where attendees will have the opportunity to try green eggs and ham, moose juice and goose juice, served by wait staff in Dr Seuss-inspired uniforms.

Characters such as the Cat in the Hat, Thing One, Thing Two and Sam will join guests at their tables.

Additionally, the ships will have a selection of Dr Seuss books, toys, movies and themed activities such as a Story Time interactive reading event and the Seuss-a-palooza character parade along the promenade.

Jennifer Vandekreeke, vp, CCL Australia, said the company was "thrilled" to bring Dr Seuss to life for its Australian passengers.

"Dr Seuss at Sea is yet another exciting addition to our family programme," Vandekreeke added.

### New Island terminal

**SEALINK** Travel Group has opened its new ferry terminal at Kangaroo Island - from which it will transport over 200,000 people per year from Adelaide.

The Penneshaw facility will ensure passengers using the ferry service will arrive at a "modern, efficient and comfortable facility," Tourism & Transport Forum chief executive Ken Morrison said.

### Scenic Asia Earlybirds

**LESS** than a month remains to take advantage of Scenic Tours' range of Earlybird deals for its luxury Asian cruise charters along the Mekong and Irrawaddy rivers.

Bookings for the 2014 & 2015 seasons must be deposited by 31 Mar to avail the offers.

### Duffy opens CS Miami

**CLIA** president & ceo Christine Duffy has pointed to ongoing growth and prosperity in the global cruising industry in her keynote address to open the 2014 Cruise Shipping Miami showcase.

Duffy reiterated prior projections showing 21.7 million passengers were expected to take a cruise in 2014, an additional 400,000 on the numbers expected last year.

She added that cruise lines were responding to passenger demand for explorations of more remote destinations, which was "creating a more dynamic and competitive market for ports and destinations" through the "expansion of cruising into new and emerging markets".

Further growth could be generated by targeting younger markets including consumers born after 1980, or "Millennials" as well as capitalising on trends including improvements in at-sea technology such as connectivity.

### Bumper cruise period

**CARNIVAL** Australia ceo Ann Sherry has told a Committee for Sydney stakeholder lunch that she estimated 240,000 passengers from Australia and overseas had visited the city in Feb & Mar alone.

Citing the potential of the local cruise industry, Sherry said the figure was the equivalent of more than 300 full A380 superjumbo aircraft with the same economic impact and tourist spend activity.

"I am very ambitious for the industry," Sherry said.

She added that each of the ships operated by P&O Cruises and Carnival Cruise Lines' fleets accounted for approx 100,000 passengers annually.

According to the latest study of cruise activity in Australia from Cruise Downunder, the industry's long value chain was expected to generate nearly \$3 billion in total income and revenue for the period 2012 to 2013.

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## Virgin Cruises

THERE is talk about town (again) of Virgin Group's five-year plan to launch into cruising; this time taken more seriously due to Sir Richard Branson's move to Arabian Gulf investors to secure \$1.7 billion for the project.

It's safe to say boutique cruising wouldn't be Virgin's style, therefore to get the ROI needed for such an outlay, Virgin would have to compete with companies such as Carnival, Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Line, who collectively cater for 80% of pax.

It is also these same cruise lines that are already focusing on the 20-40 year olds who are new-to-cruise that Branson identified to Abu Dhabi media as their target.

So the question is, how could they survive in an already diverse, value orientated industry against these giants, while pursuing a similar demographic?

Fashionable third party providers that cruise lines are now contracting to enhance guest experiences are paramount – an interesting prospect for a group known to do things differently.

On the other side of the spectrum, they may market with package offers utilising their other holdings like banks, hotels, health clubs and airlines.

Overall, whatever their strategy, be careful not to get caught up in all the hype just yet – after all, the three cruise lines mentioned are also the ones that have been innovating and driving the industry for almost 50 years.

As Easy Cruise found out, being 'new' doesn't mean guaranteed success.



## Agents to Come Back New

PRINCESS Cruises has launched a competition for Australian travel agents in line with its new brand positioning (**CU 04 Mar**).

Agents are invited to "come back new" through a training module on Princess Academy, aimed at boosting industry awareness on the cruise line's latest tag line.

All who complete the module will go in the running to win a nine-night *Diamond Princess* cruise around Japan in a balcony stateroom.

To enter, agents need to explain how Princess Cruises can make their clients "come back new" in 25 words or fewer.

The "come back new" promotion was launched following extensive market research, replaces "escape completely" and targets "meaningful travellers" who desire enriching and transformative experiences.

For more information and to enter the competition, which runs until 23 Apr, visit the World's Leading Cruise Lines training portal at [www.wlcl.com.au](http://www.wlcl.com.au).

A video capturing the essence

## HAL Alaska tour shift

HOLLAND America Line has announced a raft of changes to its post-cruise CruiseTour program in Alaska, which has now been renamed Land & Sea Journeys.

Upgrades have been rolled out on a number of transportation modes to reduce overland travel times overall, the biggest of which is the introduction of a one-hour flight from Dawson in the Yukon to Fairbanks, Alaska.

The line said the new flight is expected to be popular for pax beginning a post-cruise land tour, with travel between the two previously requiring connecting flights or an overnight coach trip.

HAL's program will be boosted further through the acquisition of the McKinley Chalets Hotel in the Denali National Park & Preserve.

of "come back new" has been released - **CLICK HERE** to view.

MEANWHILE, the line has today announced it will carry out an extensive dry dock project on *Diamond Princess* ahead of the ship's second Japanese season.

As part of the \$30 million works, the line will install an 817sqm Japanese bath and garden area at sea, a new sushi restaurant, new staterooms, boosted shopping zones and a full refurbishment.

Work will be undertaken at the Sembawang shipyard in Singapore, expected to conclude on 02 Apr.

## CLIA open Italy office

CRUISE Lines International Association has opened its 14th national office and 7th in Europe in Italy, which will be managed by Francesco Galiotti in the role of CLIA Italy National Director.

The opening of the new office was announced at Cruise Shipping Miami, with the new office joining counterparts in UK/Ireland, Spain, Germany, France, Netherlands and Belgium/Luxembourg.

Nearly 870,000 Italians booked a cruise last year, with more than 2 million embarking a cruise from a port within the country.

## Cunard celebrations

A SERIES of commemorative cruises will go on sale in Australia tomorrow, marking 175 years of continuous operation for Cunard.

The exact date will be marked with a special transatlantic sailing from the line's spiritual home of Liverpool aboard *Queen Mary 2*, the first time such a crossing has taken place since Jan 1968.

*Queen Victoria* will sail a week-long "Lusitania Remembered" voyage to mark the line's flagship which was torpedoed and sunk by German U-Boats in 1915.

In addition, all three of the line's current vessels will participate in a momentous three-day event in Liverpool from 24-26 May.

## Big day in Melbourne

MORE than 5,000 cruise pax visited Melbourne yesterday in one of the city's biggest cruising days ever, with both the *Celebrity Solstice* & *Queen Mary 2* cruising in to the Victorian capital.

CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said the combined calls were worth about \$1 million to the state economy.

Melbourne will record a total of 70 visits from 24 cruise ships over the 2013/14 cruise season, which will officially close following the of P&O *Pacific Pearl* on 29 Apr.



## HOW spooky is this?

An abandoned 110-year old ship has been re-discovered by a group of kayakers paddling in the Ohio River in the US.

The rusted hull of the ship still faintly shows *Circle Line V* from its days as a sightseeing ship for Circle Line Tours on New York City's harbour, although it has sat retired, disused & now rusted since the late 1980s.

Its history is storied, varied & interesting - between serving in two World Wars, the ship was used for scientific experiments by Thomas Edison and even appeared in the music video for Madonna's *Papa Don't Preach*.

After Circle Line's operation expanded & outgrew the ship, it was purchased by a Cincinnati resident, who briefly operated it before moving it to its current location, where it now remains.





## Face to Face: John Elderfield Sales Manager - Cruise & Maritime Voyages (CMV)

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

### How/why did you get into the cruise industry?

I was involved with European River Cruising for many years, working with Scenic Tours. Prior to that I enjoyed a long career in many areas of the travel industry. During some down time I was lucky enough to enjoy six weeks on the *Astor* on the repositioning voyage south from Rome down to Fremantle during November last year, after which time I returned to the work force as Sales Manager for Cruise & Maritime Voyages.

### Where do you see yourself in five years?

I believe it would be nice at that time to look back at a successful career with CMV, boosting sales, awareness and product from Australia.

### What is the key to your success?

An all-round knowledge of the industry, with a good network of contacts, and a thorough understanding of what makes the industry tick. Also, without doubt, a genuine love for what I do, I believe we are very lucky to work in this industry and this is a role that I find very self-motivating.

### How do you spend days at sea?

I generally rise at 0530, exercise until breakfast. I only eat light at breakfast and lunch. Enjoying deck time during day, reading and relaxing. I have a tendency to play bingo in the afternoon (it's a ship thing!). Then, meet for pre-dinner drinks, have a leisurely dinner and enjoy a show or catch up with people.

### What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

Entering the Suez Canal at midnight, with most of the ship awake and on deck to witness the event.

### Where is the next "hot spot" in cruising destinations?

Well for us at CMV I think it has to be European River Cruising, as we have just released a program for 2014. However, I also believe that Fremantle has been a hot spot during this past summer season, CMV and *Astor* has had a very strong market response, and is already showing good return business for season 15/16.

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

Learn the industry, realise what it is that makes cruising such a fortunate product to sell and be involved with. Be professional and follow up with people.

### What is the most important issue in the cruise industry today, and why?

Most probably having new ports realise the benefit of ship visitation to new areas, and planning for infrastructure to accommodate.



## John's Cruise Favourites!

**Ship:** *Astor*.

**Ship Activity:** Dinner time onboard.

**Favourite region:** Italy.

**Favourite shore excursion:** Petra was the best shore excursion I have ever done - if anyone ever has the opportunity to go there - GO!

**Favourite port:** Messina - Sicily for Taormina.

**Favourite onboard food/drink:** Perusing the red wine list at dinner.

**Favourite perk of the job:** Being involved with intending passengers at ship inspections, as they will come back off a cruise with a smile.

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