

CRUISE

WEEKLY



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APT drops Russia for 2015

LUXURY tour operators APT and Travelmarvel have made the decision not to operate its river cruise departures in Russia next year due to ongoing political instability in the region, *Cruise Weekly* can exclusively reveal.

The company advised that its senior leadership team had been closely monitoring the situation in Ukraine and Russia and would continue to review the situation relating to 2016 and beyond.

According to its earlier brochure launch, APT was due to begin operating its newly built river vessel *MS Anastasia* in Russia in May, however the company has

confirmed the building of the ship has also been postponed.

Guests booked to sail in Russia next year are being contacted through their travel agents, with "suitable alternatives found".

Agents seeking further details are advised to call 1300 668 298, email or speak to their bdm.

The decision is in line with that of APT's partner AmaWaterways, who earlier this week made the decision not to operate in Russia on its *AmaKatarina* vessel.

Today's decision adds APT, Travelmarvel and AmaWaterways to a growing list of cruise lines who have cancelled or amended Russian sailings due to the unrest.

Earlier this year, Viking River Cruises cancelled all remaining voyages in the region for 2014 (CW 03 Jul), while the following month, Silversea made significant changes to port visit schedules.

A voyage in Jul due to call at Odessa instead visited Trabzon, while other voyages spent longer in Greece & Turkey (CW 20 May).

Avalon Godmothers

AVALON Waterways will host twin French christenings in 2015, having named best-selling US author Diana Gabaldon and Canadian singer-songwriter Jann Arden as the godmothers of its newest Suite Ships.

Gabaldon, who wrote the "Outlander" series, will christen *Avalon Tapestry II* at Les Andelys on 24 Mar, while Arden will name *Avalon Tranquility II* in Strasbourg on 02 Apr.

Avalon is doubling its France ships and departures next year.

Star Clipper program

STAR Clippers has released a new program covering sailings from this month right through until Mar 2016, with summer 2015 to be its final season sailing in the Balearic Islands.

Yet-to-be-announced new itineraries will launch next year.

The tall ship specialist's three vessels will sail in the Caribbean in the northern winter, the Med and Aegean next summer and transatlantic crossings in between.

New itineraries for this season include ten-day Cuba cruises aboard *Star Flyer* plus a Venezuela and the ABC Islands voyage on *Royal Clipper*.

A series of mini "taster cruises" will operate in Europe, and early booking discounts of up to 35% are available - for details, see www.starclippers.com/au/.



Shore Excursions

EVER wondered how cruise lines are able to showcase literally thousands of shore excursions all over the world at the same time?

What appears to be very easy on the surface is in fact a complex supply chain with several layers of involvement to ensure maximum enjoyment for cruise passengers.

In each cruise region, cruise lines appoint an Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) to put together a series of shore excursions that can appeal to a wide audience.

Walking tours, wilderness and wildlife, sport and recreation, entertainment and culture, wine and food & soft adventure tours are all examples of the sort of shore excursions cruise lines look to offer passengers in each port.

It is the role of the ITO to then effectively act as the cruise line's travel agent by working with local suppliers. They are the destination experts in putting together shore excursion options that are designed to appeal and deliver good value.

For a supplier to be included in a shore excursion program, consideration is given to accessibility, distance from port, capacity to cater for groups, uniqueness, duration of the stop and above all the ability to be flexible on timing and numbers.

The cruise line's onboard shore excursion manager who appears to know everything about everything (and often does) is actually liaising with the appointed ITO behind the scenes to ensure all ground operations run smoothly.

Passenger feedback from shore excursions is closely monitored by cruise lines to ensure future visits to particular ports continue to achieve a high level of guest satisfaction.



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Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news and photos plus learn about the CW app on p3.



MOVEMBER will see multitudes of males growing mo's to raise funds for the Movember Foundation's programs and to encourage community awareness and support around men's health.

Amadeus IT Pacific men are putting out the challenge to the travel industry to raise funds for the cause. The person who raises the most money will win a **Shaving Brush Travel Kit**.

It's not too late to join - register at au.movember.com (add your company name after your name and choose to join the **Amadeus IT Pacific team**).

Email your before and after pics and progress updates to mocomp@traveldaily.com.au and we will showcase them on **Facebook** and in *Cruise Weekly*.

Get involved as an Amadeus Mo Bro! Click **HERE** to learn more about the program.

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Discovery on Princess

A NEW program of onboard activities and shore excursions has been developed for Princess Cruises in a new partnership with Discovery Consumer Products.

Dubbed 'Discovery At Sea', the pact with the licensing arm of the famous *Discovery Channel* will see some of the network's famed shows and promotions turned into entertainment for Princess.

Guests will be able to enjoy *Discovery Under The Stars* cosmic gazing, baking classes with *TLC* pastry chefs, *Shark Week* trivia games and *Discovery* themed programs for kids and teenagers involving games, videos & puzzles.

Popular shows *Mythbusters* and *Deadliest Catch* will also have onboard entertainment developed based on the shows.

Special *Discovery Channel*, *Animal Planet* & *Science Channel* themed shore excursions will be available in various ports.

"Discovery's brands resonate with a growing, global audience and we'll be bringing some of their most popular programs to life for our guests in the context of the destinations they are visiting on their cruise," Princess Cruises president Jan Swartz said.

Programming from *Discovery*, *Animal Planet* and *TLC* will also be available to view onboard Princess ships, with discounted themed merchandise to be sold.

The Discovery partnership will debut on Princess ships from early next year.

Students learn from P&O experts



HOSPITALITY and event management students from Illawarra TAFE took the classroom onboard P&O Cruises *Pacific Jewel* recently, gaining some hands-on learning from the line's experts.

Hosted by Uwe Stiefel, Carnival Australia corporate executive chef and David Drury, Carnival Australia entertainment manager, the group were taken for a tour on the daily workings of the ship's culinary & activities departments.

"The visits give them an inside view of a different sector of the tourism and hospitality industry,

as most of them would only have known a number of land-based career opportunities, such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, pubs and bars," Stiefel commented.

P&O Cruises invites several TAFE and university groups onboard its ships for similar tours each year.

Stiefel, Drury and the TAFE group are **pictured** above.

FOC drinks on balcony

CELEBRITY Cruises is offering a free Concierge Class balcony upgrade and free classic beverage package as a last minute special.

The offer applies to a 14-night South Pacific and Queensland cruise departing Sydney 01 Dec onboard *Celebrity Century*, for bookings made before 10 Nov.

Oceania fills its plates

BESPOKE line Oceania Cruises will launch new food and wine programs for onboard guests as well as culinary experiences.

A new 'Wine by the Bottle' package will debut across the fleet, which allows pax to select seven or more bottles prior to their cruise at \$42.50 per bottle to enjoy throughout their voyage.

Further, a new seven-course Odyssey menu has been added to the La Reserve tasting room onboard *Marina* and *Riviera*.



P&O, phone home...

Earthlings of...well, Earth are being invited by P&O Cruises to become "Cruiselings" instead as part of a new advertising campaign from the Aussie line.

In what P&O says is its largest advertising campaign ever, the pitch (**pictured** below) will soon take the form of TV ads in both Australia & New Zealand, in print and online before moving to cinemas & billboards.

To add an outer space feeling, the Prague Philharmonic has been engaged to provide an "out of this world" soundtrack.

The ads will debut from this Fri on the P&O Facebook page.

Fans of the page also have the chance to win a place on the inaugural *Pacific Aria* cruise by composing and uploading their own unique 30-second song in line with the campaign.



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