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CRUISE



WEEKLY



Thursday 20 Nov 2014

Windstar Tahiti base

SMALL ship operator Windstar Cruises will relocate one of its ships to Tahiti year-round in 2015 to offer South Pacific sailings.

The line has been testing the waters in the region for the past two years & has now confirmed it will position its 148-pax vessel *Wind Spirit* in Tahiti from May.

Voyages ranging from 7-11 nights will be operated, visiting Moorea, Bora Bora, Huahine and other islands in the region.

Prestige purchase finalised

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has bolstered its name as the world's third largest cruise line, overnight completing its acquisition of Prestige Cruises International.

The purchase, first announced earlier this year (**CW** 02 Sep), sees the Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania Cruises brands come under the stewardship of NCL.

Total transaction consideration for the acquisition was US\$3.025 billion, including debt assumption in line with future fleet additions.

Norwegian Cruise Line ceo Kevin Sheehan said the company has identified future synergies of \$25 million with a range of post-integration opportunities.

"Our acquisition of Prestige creates a new cruise operator with a range of complementary offerings as diversified as any in the industry," Sheehan said.

Prestige's acquisition will allow the company to enter the

small-ship and upscale luxury market segments for the first time, to compete against Carnival Corporation's Seabourn brand and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' Azamara Club Cruises.

MEANWHILE, a new lineup of entertainment productions are set to be rolled out on *Norwegian Epic's* European voyages in 2015.

Two new Broadway-style productions will debut, beginning with *Burn the Floor* in Apr, which has been playing to rave reviews on fleet-mates *Norwegian Escape* and *Norwegian Breakaway*.

In addition, famous Australian film *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* will open in its award-winning stageshow musical adaptation from the 18 Oct departure.

Vanuatu to sink ships

INSTRUCTIONS have been issued to the Vanuatu Department of Ports and Harbour to prepare two old ships for scuttling off the coast of the country.

The decision to sink the *MV Northern Star* and *MV Southern Star* came last week from the Vanuatu Council of Ministers.

Both ships were donated by the Chinese Government and have been rundown for some time.

Once scuttled, the vessels will become an artificial reef usually popular with scuba divers.

Packed CW today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of the latest cruise news, a **front full page** for **JITO** and a special page of photos about APT's recent Top Achievers reward trip - see p3.

Astor Aus future safe

CHARTER operator of *MS Astor*, Cruise & Maritime Voyages, has struck a deal with administrators which has guaranteed operation of the ship's Australian voyages for at least this season and next.

Administrators for the ship's insolvent owners have said the ship will return to Australia in both the 2014/15 & 2015/16 seasons.

Earlier this month, *Astor's* German owner Premicon Hochseeschiff GmbH & Co. KG declared insolvency (**TD** 10 Nov).



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Three cabins for two

AVALON Waterways is inviting small groups to take advantage of a new special offer of a third cabin for the price of two on its 2015 French river cruise season.

The offer is valid on departures of four French itineraries and on selected European sailings in Mar and Apr 2015 if booked by 15 Dec, unless sold out beforehand.

Further, members of the line's Journeys Club booking any Avalon Waterways voyage in 2015 will earn bonus credit of up to \$3,000 (depending on length of booking) to put towards a future Globus, Cosmos, or Avalon itinerary or Monograms tour extension.



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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Where are our MICE?

Today's CLIA column comes to you from the Cruise Shipping Asia-Pacific Conference, which kicks off today in Hong Kong. **THERE** are many of us here this week from our local cruise community providing insight and tips for the Asian market on port infrastructure requirements, itinerary planning, visa and immigration procedures, agent training, and overall cruise tourism development.

There are however some lessons we should also take back home, one specifically that I have long felt is under-utilised in our own backyard – Corporate Market potential.

The Asian MICE market is focused on cruise and they do it well. It starts with port planning; new cruise terminals doubling in the off season as conference centres, ensuring this pricey asset is constantly in use. Examples include Hong Kong, Singapore, Kobe and soon, Busan.

Also important are Event Planners' understanding of the corporate potential onboard. Productivity, value and ROI are so far in front of FIT options that it isn't even questioned. RCCL has already stated that Indonesia and India MICE business makes up almost 50% of their total sales from those markets.

For CLIA Australasia members who have spark and initiative to explore this serious revenue potential, you can access our online elective "Expanding your Cruise market," which has a special section on developing your meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions client base with downloadable tools and resources to aid you in your endeavour.



Berlitz honour for Cunard

RENOWNED and recognised cruise industry encyclopaedic authority *Berlitz Cruising & Cruise Ships Guide* has awarded Cunard two of the top three rankings for its Large Resort Ships category.

According to the 30th anniversary edition of the Berlitz Cruising & Cruise Ships guide, the British based line's vessels *Queen Mary 2* and *Queen Elizabeth* both featured in the overall rankings.

QM2 also took out the top gong for 'Most Luxurious Suites' and 'Best Cruise Ship Spas'.

Cunard chairman David Dingle said the recognition for the line in its 175th anniversary year was a momentous honour.

"It is extremely rewarding to see that Cunard is still being acknowledged for delivering a truly memorable experience at sea," Dingle commented.

The annual Berlitz guide is put together by Douglas Ward, who spends more than 200 days per year at sea independently reviewing cruise ship facilities, minus any subsidisation by lines.

Nowadays, he is assisted by a small team due to the sheer volume of new ships being released on an annual basis.

Red ink thru Black Sea

CUNARD and P&O Cruises World Cruising have become the seventh and eighth lines to cancel all port visits in the Black Sea scheduled to take place next year.

Both lines have shuffled port calls on 13 voyages, citing safety and security concerns surrounding the ongoing volatility between Ukraine and Russia.

Queen Victoria was due to visit the region from Jul-Oct 2015, with P&O's *Arcadia* sailing from 25 Aug to 20 Sep and sister-ship *Adonia* from 07 Sep to 07 Oct.

New ports to replace those cancelled have not been advised by the two UK-based cruise lines.

In a joint statement, both lines said the safety of its passengers and crew was its highest priority.

Piano Man production

CRYSTAL Cruises has secured the services of James Fox, star of hit Broadway show *Movin' Out*, to perform the hits of legendary musician Billy Joel onboard an upcoming *Crystal Serenity* sailing.

The 19 Nov 2015 voyage from Miami to Caldera will feature the production of *My Life: The Music of Billy Joel* on the concert piano in the Galaxy Lounge, backed by Crystal vocalists and performers.

Hainan eye on cruise

NORTHERN China is setting its sights on cruise tourism, with a new cruise port being earmarked for development in Haikou in the province of Hainan.

The new terminal will be built within the Xiuying Port and will act as a supplementary facility to the existing port in Sanya, located in the south of the province.

Russia 2-for-1 special

RUSSIAN Travel Centre has released a special '2-for-1' offer on small ship *MS Rostropovich*, also known in Australia as the former *MS AmaKaterina*.

Deluxe balcony staterooms on an eight-day cruise from Moscow to St Petersburg are now on sale from \$2,331pp for 18 departures beginning from 09 May next year.

The voyage also includes meals onboard and sightseeing in ports.

MSC reclaim Armonia

TEN weeks after going into drydock in Palermo, Italy, the new 'stretched' *MSC Armonia* has been returned to MSC Cruises.

Under the line's "Renaissance" program, the vessel's capacity was increased with 200 new staterooms inserted as a prebuilt block into the middle of the ship, as well as new lounges and bars.

Armonia's Lirica-class sister ships *MSC Lirica*, *MSC Sinfonia* & *MSC Opera* will also be stretched.



THE popular nautical-themed board game 'Battleships' got a little too war-like for a Utah family recently after a man allegedly pointed a rifle at his daughter during an argument that broke out during the game.

According to *The Deseret News*, the tiff between the two players broke out after the father accused his daughter of cheating, which she denied.

After the father lost his temper and broke the game, the daughter tried to leave before she was reportedly dragged back by her hair, with the gun pointed square at her.

The saga ended when the girl called 911 from her mobile phone, with the cops tracing her to her location, arriving and arresting the father.

All over a Battleships game.

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ABOVE: Dressing up in traditional Turkish style in Istanbul.

BELOW: Setting sail aboard a zodiac on one of many daily Mediterranean adventures while cruising on the *MS Island Sky*.



RIGHT: Jill Carmody from Jetset Leongatha.



ABOVE: Jos Foster, Our Vacation Centre exploring some tranquil greenery with Susan Haberle from APT.



APT Top Achievers rewarded with a luxury Mediterranean sea adventure

UNDER picture perfect European skies, 14 Aussie travel agents were rewarded for a year of top-notch APT and Travelmarvel sales with a luxurious 11-day journey through Turkey, Greece and Cyprus.

The company's annual Top Achievers trip saw the group explore Istanbul - Turkey's largest city - shopping for souvenirs at local bazaars and trying out fine local culinary delicacies and the city's nightlife.

APT-owned luxury small ship *MS Island Sky* then awaited for the remainder of the trip, where the group cruised the crystal waters of the Mediterranean, visiting sleepy coastal towns, picturesque islands and famous ruins and relics from former Turkish empires.

Time was also taken during a stop at Gallipoli to pay respects to the ANZAC memorials at Anzac Cove and Lone Pine.

Port stops included Canakkale, Kusadasi, and Rhodes, with the ship stopping at tiny Greek islands before concluding in Cyprus.

LEFT: Kath Williams, Jetset Rowville and Jill Carmody of Jetset Langatha exploring the ancient city of Ephesus in the Turkish port of Kusadasi.



ABOVE: Relaxing on the *MS Island Sky* clockwise from left is Tamami Imaseki Bullock, Andrew Jones Travel Salamanca; Nilla Sparks, Travel with Purpose; Rita Carlini, Geelong Travel; Max Seeböhm, Gambier Coachlines; Angela Kaluzyn, Skilled Travel; Jos Foster, Our Vacation Centre and Yvonne Brooks, Global Journeys Australia.



BELOW: APT's Luxury Small Ship, the *MS Island Sky* awaiting its Top Achieving pax.



ABOVE: APT's superstar crew in Australia - Ryan Montgomery, Susan Haberle and Aaron Christian with the *MS Island Sky* looking on in the background during a visit to the tiny Greek island of Kastellorizo.

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