

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 23 October 2014

Voyager work underway

ROYAL Caribbean International has submitted its mega-liner *Voyager of the Seas* into drydock in Singapore for major renovation and the addition of new features ahead of its upcoming arrival in Australian waters.

More than 3,000 shipyard workers will take to the ship over the five-week project.

Perhaps the most striking and sure to be among the most popular enhancements will be the addition of the FlowRider surfing simulator, making *Voyager* the only ship sailing locally to offer the innovative feature.

Technology will form a major part of the upgrades to be carried out to the 3,138-passenger vessel, with Virtual Balconies to

be fitted to Interior Staterooms.

Cabins will also be fitted with new carpets, furniture & bedding.

Speciality dining restaurants such as Chop's Grille and Izumi Japanese will also be added.

On top of the ship itself, tender boats will be upgraded which will also allow for new and previously inaccessible ports to be added to the schedule including Isle of Pines and Mystery Island.

Voyager of the Seas will make its first Australian call in Darwin on 30 Nov before arriving at her Sydney summer home on 08 Dec.

Fishing from Lofoten

HURTIGRUTEN has rolled out a new activities concept for pax onboard its flagship *MS Lofoten* vessel, designed to offer a classic and nostalgic experience.

Available from Apr next year, guests will be able to cast a fishing line directly from the ship and set crab pots, with catches expertly prepared by onboard chefs and served to the guest.

In addition, bridge tournaments, afternoon teas and trivia games will also be added to the service, the line's Australian sales office Discover the World advised.

The line said it is also looking at making small alterations to its traditional Bergen to Kirkenes itinerary with new diversions and ports of call for future launch.

New Rhapsody home

SOUTH America will become the new home of Royal Caribbean vessel *Rhapsody of the Seas* for its next southern hemisphere summer deployment.

Homeporting from the Brazilian port of Santos, *Rhapsody* will operate seven and fourteen-night cruises in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay in a season spanning from Dec 2015 to Apr 2016.

The vessel is currently operating its eighth consecutive Australasian season from Sydney.

Sip & Savour closing

JUST over a week remains for agents to enter Uniworld Boutique River Cruises' Sip. Savour. Sail agent incentive, with entries closing at COB on 31 Oct.

The bespoke river cruise line is encouraging agents to finalise any outstanding quotes to be in with a chance to win an eight-day 'Bordeaux, Vineyards & Chateaux' cruise for two people.

Entries are awarded for each booking deposited by next Fri.

Supplementary prizes including bottles of luxury French champagne are also up for grabs.

Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of the latest cruise news, information and photos.

Ambassadors on dock

WELCOMING cruise volunteer Ambassadors are back in action at Sydney's cruise terminals to provide assistance and helpful tips to arriving cruise passengers.

The initiative is now in its fourth year and is a joint initiative of the City of Sydney Council, Sydney Ports and Destination NSW.

Clad once again in their bright and identifiable orange shirts, the Ambassadors will meet and greet visitors at the Overseas Passenger Terminal and White Bay.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the initiative is all about providing a warm welcome to Sydney for arriving passengers.

"The City's Cruise Ambassadors have become so popular that we now taking bookings for personalised welcomes aboard ships before passengers disembark," Moore added.

Ambassadors are loaded up with maps and provide advice on things to see and do such as the city's best restaurants, theatres, museums, parks and attractions.

Last season, the Ambassadors handed out 6,625 maps and nearly 2,300 official Sydney guides to visiting tourists.



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Avis Scholarship

CLIA has proudly been a supporting sponsor of the Avis Travel Agent Scholarship of Excellence for the last 7 years.

On the surface, many will ask what has cruising got to do with car rental and the answer to this is "not a lot!"

However, when you stop and think about it, the spirit of the award brings together a vast array of support and sponsorship from many sectors of the travel industry.

Throughout our cruise industry training syllabus, we have a heavy focus on Customer Service Excellence. This being the case, the synergies in supporting the Avis scholarship along with other key suppliers are obvious.

Ultimately we are all very keen to see the highest level of professionalism and service excellence from the most important part of the distribution channel in travel - our retail agents.

Representing CLIA as a sponsor, I have had the honour of participating as a judge at the Avis Scholarship and this year it (again) delivered a group of outstanding individuals as finalists.

No doubt the effort required to make a submission is significant and the journey through the process is arduous, but the reward and recognition as a finalist and possibly as a winner is something you will cherish your entire career.

It is also worth noting the number of former winners present at the ceremony this week that are in fact CLIA Accredited Agents - perhaps some food for thought!

Congratulations to each of the finalists and the winner, Jodie Gonzales from American Express Global Business Travel.



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RCI connects the city

UNDERGROUND New York City subway platforms in Manhattan and Queens will offer free wi-fi courtesy of Royal Caribbean Int'l.

The connection comes as part of a partnership between the line & the Metropolitan Transportation Authority promoting *Quantum of the Seas* to New York City.

In addition to the free wi-fi - designed to showcase the speed of connectivity onboard the new vessel - digital billboards and displays promoting the ship will also soon pop up across the city.

Lux Lindblad lounges

UPGRADES to the main lounge on *National Geographic Orion* have been completed by Lindblad Expeditions as part of a recent refurbishment of the vessel.

The lounge has been redesigned to now comfortably fit the entire onboard contingent for talks, films and recaps of the voyage, with the library relocated to the upper deck observation lounge.

New high-definition screens have also been installed along with a new sound system.

Further improvements include the addition of an ocean-themed museum exhibition showcasing images & artworks curated by the National Geographic Museum.

Avis scholar to pick CLIA's brain



ACCESS to comprehensive training in the cruise industry is among the list of prizes awarded this week to Jodie Gonzales from American Express Global Business Travel as the winner of the 2014 Avis Travel Agent Scholarship.

Again one of the benefactors of the annual customer service focused accolade, CLIA Australasia provided a 12-month Individual Membership as one of a number of educational prizes to help Jodie develop her career.

The membership opens the door to a suite of exclusive online modules which when complete will see Gonzales attain official Cruise Industry Accreditation.

Mandatory modules to qualify for the accreditation can be taken both in a classroom format or online after they were uploaded last week (**CW** 14 Oct).

In addition, Gonzales will receive two tickets to next year's second annual Cruise3sixty cruise showcase at The Star, taking place on 27 and 28 Feb next year, which precedes the CLIA Cruise Industry Awards after the show concludes.

Gonzales is **pictured** above left with CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine.

Windstar for a steal

TRAVEL the World has released a new deal for a 12 May 2015 departure of Windstar Cruises' *Star Pride* on its nine-night Pride of the Aegean itinerary, priced from \$4,230ppts - book by 30 Nov.

Iceland cruising firm

A NEW cruise line in Iceland offering circumnavigations of the country is set to begin operations from the 2015 northern summer.

Dubbed ProCruises, the line is a subsidiary of large Icelandic tour operator Iceland ProTravel and will initially offer six departures of a 10-day itinerary from Jun-Aug & two 12-day cruises in late Aug.

The line's fleet will comprise two ships in the 224-passenger *Ocean Diamond*, formerly of the Regent Seven Seas Cruises fleet, and *Le Diamant*, which previously sailed as part of the Ponant fleet.

Voyage prices start from US\$2,050pp twin share.

The line is represented in New Zealand by Wild Earth Travel.



CRUISE lines are always trying to one-up each other in terms of envisaging what items and services a passenger could want to enhance their experience.

Luxury line Silversea has put its foot forward - literally - to raise the bar by introducing an onboard Preludio sandal cobbler to expertly make pax a pair of high-quality sandals.

The artisan service is offered in partnership with Italian sandal maker Preludio and is available on *Silver Spirit*, *Silver Whisper* and *Silver Shadow*.

Silversea general manager and director of sales/marketing Australasia Karen Christensen said the service embodied the essence of what Silversea was about - a tailored & highly professional experience.

Preludio sandals are crafted and put together without using any adhesive products and are available on selected voyages.



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**.

If you are game, **register at au.movember.com** (add your company name after your name and choose to join the **Amadeus IT Pacific team**) by the end of October.

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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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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Part of the Travel Daily group of publications.

