

CRUISE



WEEKLY



Thursday 30 Apr 2015

Aura guide on shelves

SCENIC has launched its new Irrawaddy river cruise brochure for 2016/17 featuring for the first time its new *Scenic Aura* vessel, which will debut in Sep next year.

The launch of *Aura* will follow that of *Scenic Spirit* in Jan, which will begin service on the Mekong.

Forty-four guests per sailing will be catered for on *Aura* during 10-night cruises between the cities of Mandalay and Pyay.

"Sales for the Mekong have been fantastic, showing us that our guests really want to explore this region with us and experience our signature brand of all-inclusive luxury river cruising outside of Europe," gm product development Aleisha Fittler said.

Europa 2 even better

HAPAG-LLOYD Cruises has resumed service on *MS Europa 2* after the ship underwent its first scheduled drydock renovation.

Works were carried out at German shipyard Blohm & Voss in Hamburg from 11-24 Apr.

The ship now has a redesigned Sansibar, Sushi restaurant and new-look family apartments.

Cruise Bonanza! Nth Beaches - Syd

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Bhaya appoints local rep

VIETNAM'S Halong Bay cruise operator Bhaya Cruises has named Nichole Madin as its official representative in Australia and New Zealand.

The company, which was established in 2007 and launched two new 'Au Co' vessels in 2012, said it was responding to considerable growth in sales from Australia and New Zealand over the last few years.

Madin, whose portfolio also recently expanded to include Indochina operator HG Travel, has extensive industry experience particularly with products in Vietnam and South East Asia.

She brings an extensive resume to her new client, having held senior and director roles in both retail and wholesale sectors.

Bhaya Cruises describes itself as "the premier and largest

luxury cruise operator in Halong Bay Vietnam," with vessel types including eight small Legend Halong ships available for charter, four 75-cabin Bhaya Classic vessels and the two luxury Au Co ships with 32 balcony cabins.

Bhaya Cruises said it expected the appointment to see an expansion of the business with wholesalers and tour operators across Australasia.

More information via email on nichole@bhayacruises.com.

HAL ups anniversary

FREE stateroom upgrades have today been added to the range of bonus offers available in the Holland America Line Anniversary Sale, valid for new eligible bookings made prior to 01 Jun.

Guests will receive an ocean view stateroom for the price of an interior, or a verandah cabin for the price of an ocean-view.

Current offers including up to US\$400 shore excursion credit, reduced deposits and reduced fares remain available to book, with extras for suite reservations.

Support for the port

IDEAS for improving regulatory frameworks and preparing for a lease of facilities at Darwin Port have been unanimously approved by both sides of the NT Govt.

Recommendations from a Select Committee into the port's future were universally adopted, clearing the path for the bill to be passed.

Member for Blain Nathan Barrett said it was clear both sides were working toward what was best for Northern Territory.

Celebrity to the shore

MORE than 70 shore excursions worldwide have been added to the available range for Celebrity Cruises including several under new special interest categories.

Trips are listed under four subcategories of 'Uniquely Celebrity', 'Culture and Locale', 'Lifestyle and Wellness' & 'Family'.

Tours now on the table include a behind-the-scenes tour of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, a day spent as a sultan in Istanbul, Ferrari driving in Nice, guided nature walk in Melbourne, family flamenco dancing, a treasure hunt in Copenhagen and more.

In addition, guests can customise a private shore tour or take advantage of a wider range of higher-end Celebrity Exclusives.

Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news plus a full page from **Travel Industry Expo** and a new **Face to Face** chat with Susie Coughlin of Travelmarvel.

MSC on smartphones

MSC Cruises has launched its maiden smartphone app, now able to be downloaded through the iTunes and Google Play stores.

Features of the new app include the ability to browse itineraries and fares for different voyages and regions, view special offers and learn about shore excursions.

In addition, users can explore the ships themselves through live webcam feeds and 360° images which move as the phone turns.

The app also allows viewers to pinpoint any of the line's 12 ships via global satellite positioning.

Major Explorer refurb

ROYAL Caribbean's *Explorer of the Seas* has arrived at its new Southampton homeport in the UK following a 40-day refurbishment.

In a major overhaul, the ship has seen 86 cabins added to the overall inventory, taking capacity from 3,114 to 3,228 passengers.

Works included the installation of virtual balconies in interior cabins and the creation of 24 new panoramic ocean view cabins.

Popular RCI staple eatery Chops Grille has been installed in place of Portofino alongside Izumi Sushi and Giovanni's Table.

A Flow-Rider surfing simulator has also been added to top deck.

Explorer of the Seas will later this year relocate to Sydney for the 2015/16 summer season.



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Asia feature for Tauck

FIFTEEN itineraries on nine ships, including voyages in Australia, features in the new 2016 global brochure by privately-owned cruise line Tauck.

A 16-night itinerary blending a week on land with nine nights at sea aboard chartered Ponant ship *Le Soleal* stars as part of a bolstered 2016 range in Australia.

The itinerary has been modified to remove three days at sea crossing the Tasman with a flight between the countries instead.

Asia has also been enhanced, with a new 13-day Treasures of Southeast Asia program mixing a nine-night cruise on *L'Austral* with a two-night Hong Kong pre-stay.

Ponton back to sea

CELEBRITY health and fitness guru Shannan Ponton will resume operating his Biggest Bootcamp at Sea program on select Carnival Cruise Line sailings next season.

The energetic Ponton will feature on *Carnival Spirit* and *Carnival Legend* on its 04 Jul and 04 Nov sailings respectively.

In addition to fitness classes and bootcamp sessions, Ponton will conduct healthy living and wellness coaching seminars.

ASF studying other sites

CHINESE-BACKED ASF Consortium may now redirect its available investment funds away from the axed Gold Coast cruise terminal into other projects and joint ventures in Australia.

According to *The Australian* today, ASF has signed a cooperative deal with CCCC Guangzhou Dredging to work together on future projects including marine infrastructure.

While Kirra and a port offshore from the Gold Coast Seaway have been mooted in the past, Wave Break Island was the preferred option, however this has now been axed by the Qld Govt.

Ruling out development on Wave Break Island was one of the main policies the Labor Party took into the recent state election won by leader Annastacia Palaszczuk.

Queensland State Development Manager Anthony Lynham delivered the news to ASF Project Director Tim Poole this week that the development proposal on Wave Break Island was being suspended, encouraging the firm to look for an alternative site.

In an effort to try and maintain prospective jobs that would have

eventuated from the project had it proceeded, the government has said it will work closely with ASF to find another investment project that meets its guidelines.

ASF has said its new agreement with CCCC Guangzhou Dredging didn't affect any other investors.

Booze included on Sky

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has launched a new cruise package inclusive of alcoholic drinks under \$11 as part of enhancements to its Freestyle Cruising product.

The deal is valid on three and four-night *Norwegian Sky* sailings from Miami to the Bahamas starting from Jan next year.

Renovation for Dawn

AUSTRALIA'S first gourmet garden beer and wine festival at sea will be available on *Dawn Princess* following a two-week drydock concluding next month, Princess Cruises has announced.

Festivals will take place twice during cruises of seven days or longer, with the top deck turned into a mini-festival offering regional beer and wine, live music and gourmet food.

Further improvements coming to *Dawn* include a renovated Wheelhouse Bar, significantly expanded whiskey selection and a new Italian cafe dubbed Amuleto.

The onboard food court will be turned into a World Fresh Marketplace offering cuisines in line with destinations visited.

New treatments and facilities will be added to the onboard spa.

Dawn Princess will return to service with a 12-night cruise from Singapore to Fremantle, priced from \$949pp twin share.



RETURNING to his hometown of Tyneside, which so happened to be the same place that Cunard built 23 of its ships over the last 175 years, global music star Sting wowed the crowds with a special performance.

Promoting his latest album, entitled 'The Last Ship', Sting's performance was sponsored by Cunard as it ramps up to its 175th anniversary next month.

The performance was also held to benefit the Sage Gateshead 10th Birthday Appeal.

Sting said he was proud of his heritage links to the Tyneside shipbuilding community, which saw 23 Cunard ships built such as *Mauretania* and *Carpathia*, two vessels used to rescue stranded passengers from the Titanic.

"The Last Ship' stories are based on the community I was brought up in, the shipbuilding community of Wallsend, and so to bring it back here like this is a wonderful honour and very emotional," Sting commented.

The British music star last performed songs from the album during a guest sailing on *Queen Mary 2* last year.

Learn a new Anthem

ROYAL Caribbean International has released a new video detailing the statistics about its newly delivered *Anthem of the Seas*, which is about to launch at its maiden home in Southampton.

Anthem's size and scale makes for some interesting viewing, with figures on the different elements of the ship certain to amaze.

To view the video, **CLICK HERE**.

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CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

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Technology Update

IT'S important for agents to keep up to date with the advancement of technology on cruise ships as taking a snapshot in the middle of its evolution is exactly where misconceptions and outdated perceptions arise from.

Two of the largest ship communication providers; MTN Communications and Harris CapRock have been working on this for a while and we should see the results coming to our region soon as their establishment on international ships is progressing.

MTN began a rollout in 2012 of new systems that included a hybrid satellite and terrestrial broadband network, an Internet billing method akin to land-based resorts, while delivering seamless access at sea through any device and shared plans with improved management of data consumption.

By all reports the ships that have undergone this change have improved their passenger experience exponentially.

The industry is also seeing a shift in Internet pricing so passengers are billed per MB instead of by the minute. Users can browse websites as long as they want, or read emails without paying more. Carnival International are beginning to put packages together for unlimited access to popular social sharing apps such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, for a flat rate of USD\$5 per day.

All cruise lines will package these services in their own way, so keep an eye out for changes over the next year on ships in our local area so your "snapshot" is current and up-to-date.



Crystal kids free

CRYSTAL Cruises is offering some family-friendly bonuses for selected Sep-Dec sailings, with children under 17 sailing free with two adults pay full fare.

Groups and families of six or more get extra onboard credits - see www.wiltrans.com.au.

Carnival ship shifting

CAPACITY demands in a number of US departure ports is seeing Carnival Cruise Line move a number of its ships to meet.

Effective Nov 2016, *Carnival Victory* will be shifted to San Juan in Puerto Rico to operate week-long itineraries in the Caribbean.

In turn, *Carnival Ecstasy* will be moved to Charleston, South Carolina, while *Carnival Fantasy* will head to a new home in Miami.

McGeary cruise host

APT has announced company founder Geoff McGeary OAM will personally host the upcoming 15-day Aegean Odyssey cruise of the Greek and Turkish islands, departing on 04 Jul this year.

Taking place onboard the chartered Paul Gauguin vessel *MV Tere Moana*, the sailing from Athens to Istanbul will also include a visit to Gallipoli war memorials at Anzac Cove and Lone Pine.

Staterooms on the vessel are priced from \$12,995ppts, with a 13-day rail and land extension to Prague able to be added, taking the total price to \$24,795ppts.

APT expands India

A SEVEN night river cruise onboard the *RV Ganges Voyager* combined with a 12-night land adventure forms a new 20-day journey added as part of APT's new 2016 India river cruise guide.

The itinerary is priced from \$16,195ppts and includes a range of APT Signature Experiences including a local cooking insight and a fire-lit Aarti ceremony.

Cruises on the 56-passenger *RV Ganges Voyager* are from Kolkata to Murshidabad or vice-versa.

Aussie TC's join Caribbean jaunt



THREE lucky Australian Travel Counsellors joined with a larger group of their overseas counterparts recently for a week on the high Caribbean seas.

The Travel Counsellors Global Cruise Challenge saw Carla Conroy, Danielle Catrupi and

Carol Mills meet up with their colleagues from the UK, Ireland, South Africa and the Netherlands for a cruise on Royal Caribbean's *Allure of the Seas* mega-liner.

Departing from Fort Lauderdale in Florida, the cruise visited Haiti, Jamaica and Mexico over the seven night journey.

In addition to the port visits, the group immersed themselves in all activities onboard from relaxing in the day spa through to flying over the decks on a zip line.

The Australian agents said their eyes had been opened further to the world of cruising, confident their experience will help them in selling greater numbers of cruise cabins to their own client bases.

The group is **pictured** above in their finest gear prior to dinner.

South America tours

THREE new pre or post cruise tours in South America have been developed by Norwegian Cruise Line for customers to tag on as an optional extension of a voyage onboard *Norwegian Sun*.

Valid for travel from Nov, the itineraries range in length from three to five days and allow pax to tour Argentina or Chile, the latter including Easter Island.

Voyages will link up with either an eastbound or westbound voyage on *Norwegian Sun*, which will sail between Santiago and Buenos Aires during a five-month season from Nov to Apr 2016.

Century off the table

CENTURY Casinos has ended its casino concession deals under mutual agreement with Oceania Cruises and Seven Seas Cruises, effective from 01 Jun this year.

Early termination fees of US\$4m has been paid by the Norwegian Cruise Line subsidiaries.

Instead, Century will revert to a two-year consultancy agreement to oversee the lines' casinos.

Events on Seabourn

COMPANIES can tailor new corporate and events packages on Seabourn themed Jazz cruises under a new tie-up between two event management firms.

Landry & Kling Events has joined with Entertainment Cruise Productions in a three year tie-up which will see new luxury cruise travel experiences released, valid on the themed Seabourn voyages.

Five and seven-night packages are available for departures in Oct 2015 and Oct 2016, with tailored shore excursion programs also on the table for development.



FACE : FACE

SUSIE COUGHLIN

National Sales Manager - Travelmarvel



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

How/why did you get into the cruise industry?

When I joined Travelmarvel's sister company APT in 1991, the only cruising we offered was Alaska. Today, not only do we operate multiple brands, but we also offer many different cruise styles and destinations. For Travelmarvel, river cruising is one of our core products and we are proud to be a leading player in an exciting and vibrant industry.

Where do you see yourself or your company in five years time?

Having just stepped into my new role as National Sales Manager for Travelmarvel, I have my sights firmly set on growing the brand and product awareness, both now and into the future. Travelmarvel has carved out its own niche in the industry, offering a unique combination of premium product and exceptional value, so I predict that the next five years will be an exciting period of growth.

What is the key to your success?

During my 30 years experience working in sales, I can honestly say that no two days are ever the same. That's what keeps me motivated and challenged. My motto is to 'make a new friend every day' therefore travel agents and customers find me friendly, approachable and extremely capable.

How many cruises have you been on in the last five years?

I love river cruising and have been lucky enough to explore the waterways of Europe from Amsterdam to Budapest and in Asia, the Yangtze River in China and the Mekong in Vietnam and Cambodia.

How do you spend your days while river cruising?

Participating in the activities and lectures onboard, generally relaxing with a book, capturing each destination on my prized camera, or taking in the history, sights, sounds and smells of the many shore excursions. Food is also an important component and I love being able to taste the local cuisine and delicacies - both on and off the ship.

What is the next "hot spot" in cruising destinations?

For Travelmarvel, Burma is really popular. We also continue to attract strong interest in our European river cruises.

What is the most important issue in the cruising industry today?

Keeping up with demand for new and unique cruise destinations is crucial. At Travelmarvel, we are in the process of building our own river ship in Burma, ready for launch next year, plus we've added river cruising in India in response to guest feedback.

What do you think is the most under-rated aspect of cruising?

The comprehensive inclusions that come with Travelmarvel river cruising are underrated in my opinion, particularly with the current fluctuations in the AUD. We also guarantee our pricing, which offers complete peace of mind for the same reason.

What is something you wish more agents knew about cruising?

River cruising is incredibly flexible, you visit new destinations every day and you dock in the heart of the town or city. There is also a misconception that people feel they aren't in the right age bracket for river cruising, however enjoyment can most definitely be had by mixing with all age groups.

What makes Australians different to other cruise passengers?

The majority of Australian and New Zealanders like to travel with like-minded people rather than a huge diversity in nationalities, which is why our cruises that sell predominantly to these markets are the most popular.

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

We all have to start somewhere, so be prepared to work towards your dream position. If you wish to end up in sales, start with a wholesaler that has their own sales division - let them see you shine and the results will follow.



Susie's Cruise Favourites

Ship: *La Marguerite*.

Ship Activity: Spending time in the lounge where I get to know my fellow travellers.

Shore excursion: Anything that involves shopping!

Region or Country: Hungary.

Port: Budapest.

Onboard food/drink: Food - anything that doesn't involve gluten.

Perk of the job: No two days are the same!

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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