

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Tuesday 25 Aug 2015

## Spa operator sold

**ONBOARD** spa specialist Steiner Leisure Limited is set to be taken over by private equity firm Catterton for US\$925 million, a 21.5% share price premium. Steiner Leisure has operations on about 145 cruise ships globally.

## Crystal, Star parent record

**CRYSTAL** Cruises has signed an agreement for the purchase of not one, but two aircraft for US\$110 million, as the business continues plans to leverage its "luxury client database" via new ventures including Crystal Luxury Air private jet journeys.

The acquisition of a second jet was revealed as part of the half yearly results announcement by new parent Genting Hong Kong, which also owns Star Cruises.

At least one of the new planes will be a Boeing 787, ceo Edie Rodriguez confirmed.

The new ownership of Crystal has unleashed major expansion for the company which is also set to launch the new 62-passenger *Crystal Esprit* luxury yacht, after a major conversion of the existing *MegaStar Taurus*.

Genting Hong Kong's overall result was a massive six monthly profit of over US\$2 billion, with a windfall accounting gain due to the classification of its stake in Norwegian Cruise Lines Holdings from an "associate" of the group to an "available-for-sale investment".

The company, which finalised the Crystal purchase in mid-May, boosted its cruise turnover 2.5% to US\$265m including \$99m in passenger ticket revenue and \$165.6m in onboard revenue.

## World Journeys Amazon one-off

**WORLD** Journeys will operate a special "one-off" Amazon voyage aboard the *Delphin II* with Canadian explorer and "true Amazonia scholar" John Hemming on board.

The five day/four night trip departs 10 Feb 2016 - more info [www.worldjourneys.com.au](http://www.worldjourneys.com.au).

## Seabourn Asia out

**SEABOURN** is expanding its Asian itineraries for the upcoming summer season, with *Seabourn Sojourn* operating 14-day Myanmar and Malaysia voyages roundtrip from Singapore, 14 day Vietnam and Thailand cruises between Singapore and Hong Kong, and a Philippines and Borneo voyage ex HKG - 13 24 02.

## Lirica to visit China

**MSC** Cruises has announced its first sailing to China, with the upgraded *MSC Lirica* to voyage from Rio de Janeiro to Shanghai.

Three different versions of a "Grand Voyage," with Shanghai as its final destination, will be on offer with departures from Rio as well as Genoa and Dubai.

"We are delighted to once more be able to offer our guests a brand new itinerary - from Brazil to China via Europe - offering the chance to visit some of the most appealing destinations," said MSC Cruises Australia chief Lynne Clarke.

## CDU conference adds Asia expert

**THE** organisers of the upcoming Cruise Down Under conference, taking place in Darwin next week, have confirmed that Asia cruise expert Dwain Wall will join the line-up of presenters.

Wall, who is currently co-president of Beijing-based WorldCruise.cn and ylly.com, both online travel agencies which he helped to launch.

They are China's "first and only comprehensive online platforms" which allow Chinese-speaking agents and consumers learn about, book and sell more than 60 cruise lines.

Wall has also held other senior roles in the cruise industry including as Senior Vice President of Agency and Trade Relations for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

The 2015 Cruise Down Under conference will take place at the Hilton Darwin from 02-04 Sep with the theme "Uniting Australia's Cruise Future".

**Cruise Weekly** will be reporting on location from the event, which is also sponsored by Tourism NT, Darwin Port Corporation and Tourism Top End.

Registrations are still available at [www.cruisedownunder.com](http://www.cruisedownunder.com).

## Today's issue of CW

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise news and photos.

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## Brochure Spotlight

### Lindblad National Geographic - Europe



LINDBLAD Expeditions says its new 2016 Europe brochure gives agents the tools to significantly grow their bookings for the inaugural European season of *National Geographic Orion*.

The program includes 22 week-long itineraries, exploring the diversity of Europe to create a daily menu of "authentic, cultural experiences".

*Orion* will be the only luxury expedition ship operating a full season in Europe next year complete with on-board Zodiacs and kayaks as well as bicycles to allow independent exploration.

The glossy brochure comes with maps, a day-by-day breakdown of each itinerary plus "effortless pre and post trip extensions" - copies available by calling Lindblad on 1300 361 012.

## Princess film fest at sea

PRINCESS Cruises will run its first ever Travelling Film Festival at Sea next Feb, with passengers on board *Diamond Princess* enjoying a New Zealand movie theme as the vessel crosses the Tasman.

The move is part of the cruise line's partnership with the Sydney Film Festival (*CW 02 Jun*), with *Diamond* featuring six contemporary Kiwi films during the first four days of a 12 night roundtrip cruise to New Zealand from Sydney.

NZ movie producer Bridget Ikin, who selected the films for the Festival, will be a special guest on

the cruise and will also present two of her own films: the 1990 classic *Angel at My Table* directed by Jane Campion, as well as the new film *Sherpa* which had its world premiere at the 2015 Sydney Film Festival.

The initiative is expected to be a "box-office hit" with guests, according to Princess vp Australia/NZ, Stuart Allison.

Tickets for the 04 Feb 2016 departure are now on sale from \$1599ppts, with the voyage taking in Tauranga, Auckland, Wellington, Akaroa, Dunedin and the Fjordland National Park.

## P&O NRL partnership

A NEW alliance between P&O Cruises, Sportsnet Holidays and the National Rugby League will see fans cruising to next year's Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines.

The event is being marketed as The Greatest Weekend of Rugby League, with Sportsnet Holidays creating an exclusive eight-night package departing Sydney on *Pacific Pearl* on 31 Jan 2016.

After a four night trans-Tasman cruise, participants will then spend four nights in Auckland to attend the league competition at Eden Park.

The package is priced from \$1765 per person including a return flight from Auckland to Sydney, a Fri night kick off function including dinner, drinks and NRL guests, and a full weekend pass to the Nines.

## New Viking screens

VIKING Ocean Cruises has replaced almost all of the shower screens aboard its new *Viking Star*, after several incidents in which they shattered without warning.

Viking said the "isolated" failures of the glass were related to the installation process while the vessel was being fitted out at Italy's Fincantieri shipyard.

The company said that safety was its top priority, and after consulting with the manufacturer it had decided to reinstall the panels, with the process now completed on almost all of the staterooms in the 930-pax ship.

"We regret that some of our guests experienced this situation," a spokesperson said.

## More Scenic sessions

SCENIC has announced a second round of *Ever Wondered* sessions, which will run across Australia from 20 Sep-13 Oct in partnership with local agencies.

Travel agents are invited to bring their clients to one of the free information sessions which will showcase Scenic's France, Portugal, Russia, Mekong and Irrawaddy all-inclusive river cruising programs, as well as land product in Africa and South America.

Seats are limited so pre-booking is essential, with events set for Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Perth and Adelaide - for more info call 138 128.

## Pandaw past discount

PANDAW River Adventures is offering a 5% additional discount for past passengers.

The offer is valid on departures between Jun 2016 and Apr 2017, for bookings made by 31 Aug.

Agents can secure the discount for their clients by making a booking on [www.pandaw.com](http://www.pandaw.com) and then emailing the operator on [information@pandaw.com](mailto:information@pandaw.com) with details of the passengers' previous trip with Pandaw, at which point the company will adjust the total price.

A 20% non-refundable deposit is required to make a booking.



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## Cruise Calendar

This week's port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia.

SYDNEY	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	25 Aug
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	29 Aug
<i>Sun Princess</i>	30 Aug
PORT DOUGLAS	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	26 Aug
YORKEYS KNOB	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	25 Aug
DARWIN	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	28 Aug
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	29 Aug

## Crystal free wi-fi

**CRYSTAL** Cruises has announced it will offer free on-board internet access to all passengers on board both *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity*.

Deluxe Stateroom and Penthouse guests will get one free hour of wi-fi per day, while Penthouse Suite guests will get 90 minutes per day each.

Internet access will also be offered on the new Crystal Yacht Cruises *Crystal Esprit* which makes her maiden voyage on 23 Dec this year.

Guests wanting more time online can access a range of extra packages, with 'pay as you go' costing US\$0.74 per minute; two hours for US\$55, five hours for US\$127 and ten hours for US\$220.

Crystal last year upgraded internet access on its vessels, both maximising satellite bandwidth and boosting wi-fi signal range throughout the ships.

The line also made internet available in areas where it was previously not offered, e.g. Japan.

## Meet Evergreen's new twins



**EVERGREEN** Tours last weekend christened its third and fourth Emerald 'Star Ships' in Budapest, Hungary, with the godmothers of both vessels coming from the travel industry in the US and the UK.

*Emerald Sun* and *Emerald Dawn* both have capacity for 182 guests in 92 cabins - 20 staterooms and 72 balcony suites.

Julie Kendrick, who started as a counter salesperson at the UK's Co-Operative Travel 25 years ago and is now Midcounties Co-operative Travel head of commercial and marketing, is the new *Emerald Sun* godmother.

And Kelly Bergin, who was recently named president of OASIS, a national affiliation of independent travel consultants across the USA, is the godmother of the new *Emerald Dawn*.

Evergreen said both women (**pictured inset**) "share a true love and passion for cruising... and as strong advocates of the fastest growing segment known as river cruising, support and train countless other travel professionals".



## Costa cable breaks

**COSTA** Crociere has confirmed there were no injuries when a cable broke while an excursion boat was being lowered from its *Costa Mediterranea* as it prepared to ferry passengers to Kotor in Montenegro.

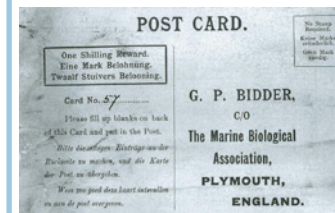
Facebook images of the incident (below) show what appears to be a lifeboat dangling from the side of the vessel, with a report in Italian newspaper *L'Unione Sarda* quoting Costa describing the incident as a "technical problem".



## PORTHOLE

**WHAT** is being billed as the world's oldest message in a bottle has finally reached its destination, more than a century after being tossed into the North Sea as part of a research project.

The bottle washed up on a beach on the German island of Amrum, part of the North Frisian group, and was found by a couple in April who opened it to find a postcard (**pictured**) asking that it be sent to the Marine Biological Association of the UK.



According to Guy Baker from the Association, the bottle was one of 1,000 tossed into the ocean by the group's former president George Parker Bidder, who was studying ocean currents as he crossed the Atlantic in 1905.

Inside each bottle was a postcard promising a one shilling reward to anyone who returned it along with information about where and when they found the bottle.

The Association is now hoping the Guinness Book of Records will recognise the message in a bottle as the oldest ever found, surpassing the previous record of a 99-year-old bottle released in 1914 found two years ago.

Meanwhile the German couple who made the find have been sent an antique shilling to fulfil the promise on the postcard.

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