

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 17 Dec 2015

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

Carnival hotel chief

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has named Richard Morse as senior vice president of hotel operations. Morse joins Carnival early next month after 36 years with Marriott International.

He'll be responsible for "all guest-facing aspects of the Carnival vacation experience" including entertainment, culinary and dining, beverage, housekeeping and guest services.

Brilliant of the Seas?

CHINESE firm Suzhou Tai Hu International Travels has announced the launch of a new cruise operation from Shanghai, with subsidiary Diamond Cruise International possibly debuting as soon as Mar 2016.

Diamond Cruise has acquired a cruise vessel from Germany, which it's calling *Brilliant of the Seas* - probably to the consternation of Royal Caribbean.

Suzhou Tai Hu says it intends to acquire up to four more vessels in the next few years in order to "gain supremacy" in the fast growing Chinese cruise market.

The company has significant experience as a supplier to other cruise lines, with operations in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Nanjing.

CLIA agent benefit boost

A **HOST** of new benefits for travel agents has been revealed today as part of a major membership revamp for Cruise Lines International Association in Australia and New Zealand.

The changes, which are being hailed as a "new era" for the organisation, will debut on 01 Jan 2016, integrating CLIA membership and training for the first time, while also offering travel agents access to new training and rewards.

CLIA member travel agents will be eligible for any special offers from CLIA member cruise lines as well as discounts from major Australian and New Zealand hotels, restaurants, cinemas and supermarkets such as Woolworths, Coles, Westfield, JB Hi-Fi and Target.

Further to this agents can also apply for a global cruise agent ID card opening them up to worldwide travel perks, similar to CLIA agent members in the US.

In a bid to make it more



accessible for agency staff to become cruise specialists CLIA commercial manager Brett Jardine said training modules and key electives

would be included in the CLIA travel agent membership fee.

"With CLIA training now available online and key modules included in the membership fee, it's never been easier for agents to improve their cruise knowledge and make the most of our booming cruise market," Jardine said.

"We're very excited to offer our members this new program as it gives agents even more reasons to sell cruises," he continued.

The company is promoting the restructure as a way to deliver significant savings for agencies committed to training their staff to become cruise specialists.

For more information visit cruising.org.au or cruising.org.nz.

Reef Endeavour to be upgraded

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji has announced a \$1 million refit of its *Reef Endeavour*, with cabin refurbishments and new sun deck Jacuzzis to be installed over a month-long construction program kicking off in late Jan.

Aurora in the Arctic

AURORA Expeditions has launched a new 24 day Arctic tour with early bird savings of up to \$2000 per person.

The 'Arctic Complete' adventure offers an in-depth exploration of Spitsbergen, Greenland & Iceland's most remote coastlines.

All 2017 bookings made before 31 Jan will pay 2016 prices, saving up to \$2,000 per person.

Early bird prices start from \$6,380 per person for 11 day Arctic voyages - 1300 061 490.

RCCL appointment

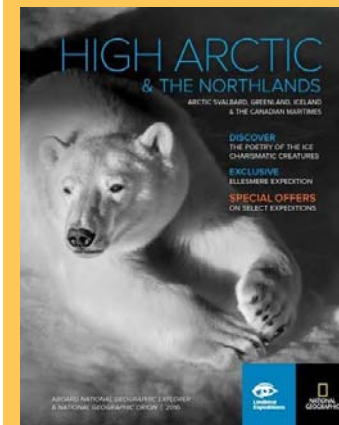
ROYAL Caribbean Cruises Limited has announced the appointment of Maritza G. Montiel as a new independent non-executive director.

Montiel has 35 years of involvement in professional services, having retired from her former role as deputy ceo and vice chairman of Deloitte LLP.



Brochure Spotlight

Lindblad High Arctic & Northlands



LINDBLAD Expeditions - National Geographic has released this new 2016 Arctic brochure.

For the first time the *National Geographic Explorer* and *National Geographic Orion* will tour the picturesque Arctic and the sub-Arctic regions, offering eight unique itineraries.

Options include an in-depth exploration of Arctic Svalbard, touring Norway's Fjords, Svalbard, Iceland & Greenland's East Coast, the Canadian and the Maritimes. Details on 1300 361 012.

Serenity to America

CRYSTAL Cruises has announced the repositioning of *Crystal Serenity* in 2017, with the vessel sailing throughout North America for most of the year.

Itineraries will take in both the east and west coasts including Alaska, New England and Eastern Canada as well as the eastern seaboard into the Caribbean.

Historically *Serenity* has spent most of her time in Western Europe, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, with the new 2017 program including seven-day explorations of the Californian coastline plus cruises through the Hawaiian islands and Mexico.

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Jen and the Grinch



NEVER one to shy away from a photo opportunity, Carnival Cruise Line vice president Jennifer Vandekreeke cuddled up to the Grinch on board *Carnival Spirit* during a recent voyage, where the green giant was playfully disrupting onboard festivities as part of the Seuss at Sea program. She said she was doing her bit to teach the cantankerous curmudgeon that "maybe Christmas means more than what comes from a store".

P&O appoints president

STURE Myrmell says stepping into the role as president of P&O Cruises Australia (*CW* breaking news yesterday) was proof the brand had "matured and holds its own in the global fleet".

Yesterday Carnival Corporation announced that P&O Australia's "massive growth" this year had led to the decision to appoint a full-time president for the first time in Australia.

Sture Myrmell, who currently acts as senior vice president for P&O, will take the reins of his new role on 01 Jan 2016.

Ann Sherry, who has been leading the day-to-day activities of P&O, will become Carnival Australia's executive chairman.

Myrmell has worked on board ships for more than two decades, across almost every facet of the cruise business.

At present he is responsible for P&O's commercial guest experience and product

development areas.

"I have enjoyed working alongside Ann over the past eight years and have learnt from the best," he said.

"I am delighted that with Ann stepping up to the role of executive chairman for Carnival Australia, I continue to have the opportunity to work in partnership with her," he continued.

Sherry was full of similar praise for Myrmell saying she was "very proud" to hand the day-to-day operations of P&O Cruises to him.

Sherry said Sture's appointment was "recognition of the value and power of P&O Cruises in Australia and New Zealand.

"It is also wonderful acknowledgement of Sture's leadership in transforming P&O Cruises into a product that is like no other in the marketplace."

Myrmell will report to Holland America Group ceo Stein Kruse.

Darwin cruise record

DARWIN will host its largest contingent of Chinese cruise ship passengers today with about 400 tourists from China among the 700 visitors arriving on board *Superstar Virgo*.

"Today's visit by *Superstar Virgo* will help raise the profile of the Northern Territory in the region as the Chinese visitors share photos and stories of their stopover with family and friends on social media," said NT minister for Asian Engagement & Trade, Peter Styles.

Styles said the Greater China outbound market was one of the fastest growing in the world and the NT government was doubling its marketing budget in the region to help attract more visitors.

As part of the stopover passengers will visit Crocodylus Park and the Spectacular Jumping Crocodile Cruise at Adelaide River.

Darwin is the ship's final port of call in Australia during its current season.

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2015 Review

THIS is the last CLIA column for the year so below is my take on some highlights from 2015.

In February, the 14th Annual Cruise Industry Awards were taken to new heights with outstanding industry achievements recognised and rewarded. Planning for the 15th Cruise Industry Awards delivery is well under way and if you don't have an invitation or ticket you are going to miss something VERY special!

CLIA hosted the second Cruise360 Australasia in February as well, with high profile cruise executives the focus of a quality program. Pre-program earlybird tickets are now on sale for the third C360 Australasia which will be in May 2016.

In May 2015 CLIA announced that ONE MILLION Australians had cruised in the previous year. Based on data provided by CLIA member cruise lines this was an extraordinary achievement by all concerned in this market.

The fourth annual Cruise Week in September realised some record breaking media coverage and very positive results from a variety of CLIA members. This has certainly inspired us and planning for Cruise Week 2016 is already underway.

To all readers of *Cruise Weekly*, the team at CLIA wishes you a very happy and safe festive season.



MSC arrives in Cuba

TOMORROW MSC Cruises will become the first global cruise line to home port in Havana, Cuba.

"Havana has never seen a ship this size," ceo of MSC Cruises Gianni Onorato, said.

MSC Opera which can carry 2,600 passengers is due to arrive in the Cuban capital tomorrow.

The ship will home port in the city for the winter 2015-16 season, offering 16 Caribbean cruises. A second ship in the line *MSC Armonia* will operate out of Cuba from Nov 2016 (CW Tue).

Onorato said while its Cuban cruises were not currently being offered to the US market, bookings from Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been "above our estimations."

Onorato said as one of the main four global cruise liners in the world, MSC was the first into Cuba and the only one not headquartered in the US.

US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced a year ago they would work towards a normalisation of relations after half a century of Cold War hostilities, although a US trade embargo of Cuba remains in place.

New Princess beds

PRINCESS Cruises will roll out more than 44,000 beds to every stateroom across its fleet in 2018.

The new Princess Luxury Bed was developed in collaboration with "The Sleep Doctor" Dr Michael Breus and acclaimed designer Candice Olson.

The beds which feature two-inch pillow tops, a nine-inch, medium firm mattress and individually wrapped coils for less partner disturbance have been designed to "deliver the ultimate night of sleep at sea".

Delights of the Danube!



THESE twelve Aussie travel agents recently had the chance to experience Evergreen's Emerald 'Star Ship', *Emerald Sun*, on the eight day Delights of the Danube River Cruise.

Hosted by Evergreen's sales & marketing team, the group sailed the Danube River from Nuremberg to Budapest in Nov where they experienced a unique "You're Invited" home-hosted afternoon tea with a Slovakian family in Bratislava, toured Austria's Melk Abbey and the

magnificent Schonbrunn Palace in Vienna.

They also enjoyed a choice of "Discover More" options to tour Salzburg or to explore UNESCO World Heritage listed Cesky Krumlov. There was also just a bit of shopping at the Christmas markets along the way.

The group is **pictured above** at Evergreen's prime docking position in front of Budapest Parliament.

NCL 2017 destinations

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has revealed its North America, Bahamas and Bermuda itineraries for summer 2017.

The new schedule will offer longer Alaska Cruises on three ships with itineraries ranging from seven to 14 nights.

Norwegian Pearl & Norwegian Jewel will sail seven day Glacier Bay & Sawyer Glacier itineraries, from Seattle & *Norwegian Sun* will alternate between Vancouver, British Columbia & Alaska.

The recently refurbished *Norwegian Gem* will sail seven-day Bahamas and Florida cruises from New York and NCL will continue its tradition of sailing from both New York City and Boston to Bermuda.

Norwegian Gem will again offer two summer Canada and New England round trip cruises from New York City.

The 2017 cruises will go on sale on 22 Dec for Latitudes Rewards guests and travel partners, with general reservations opening to the public the following day.



CRUISE ships - the next robotic frontier?

Royal Caribbean already has bionic bartenders, and it looks like the trend will continue with the Costa Group confirming an exclusive €1 million deal with French company Aldebaran for an onboard trial of its "Pepper" robot range.

Pepper (**below**) is claimed to be the first robot to read human emotions, and is "ideally suited to help and delight guests on board cruise ships".

The move will see Pepper roll out on Costa and AIDA vessels, guiding guests when they embark and being on hand to provide recommendations on restaurants, events and excursions in "impeccable German, Italian and English".



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