

CRUISE



WEEKLY



Thursday 29 Jan 2015

Rhapsody farewell

AGENTS wishing to bid adieu to Royal Caribbean's *Rhapsody of the Seas* as it departs Australia for the last time are invited to a special Bon Voyage party taking place at Circular Quay on 17 Apr.

The event will be hosted by retailer Cruise Express at the aptly titled Cruise Bar from 4-7pm.

Tickets for the event are priced at \$99 and include food, drinks, entertainment and more - tickets at www.cruiseexpress.com.au.

Avalon 2016 preview

DOZENS of itineraries feature in a newly released river cruising preview brochure now available from Avalon Waterways.

The guide details 30 itineraries taking in the Seine, Rhône, Rhine and Danube Rivers as well as the Mekong and Irrawaddy in Asia.

Discounts of 10% are also in market on all brochured cruises, with the full guide coming soon.

Seabourn names its babies

UPMARKET small-ship line Seabourn has today announced it will name its two forthcoming Fincantieri-built ships *Seabourn Encore* and *Seabourn Ovation*.

A new micro-site has been launched to correspond with the announcement, showcasing artist renderings of onboard

offerings, news and information on the progress of the newbuilds including the number of "sunsets until launch" - **CLICK HERE** to view.

The first new vessel was ordered in late 2013 (**CW** 22 Oct 2013) with notice of the option takeup coming last month (**CW** 02 Dec).

Both ships will offer capacity for more than 600 passengers each, have been classed as "ultra luxury" and will be among the largest in the Seabourn fleet.

The line's president Richard Meadows said both ships will applaud the current fleet in both vessel design & guest experience.

"Both words, *Encore* and *Ovation*, pay tribute to the tremendous success and outstanding accomplishments our current ships have achieved. They are perfect names to celebrate Seabourn's expanding fleet."

Carnival gaming app

ADULT passengers on Carnival Corp ships now no longer need to visit the onboard casino to game after the firm launched a shipboard mobile gaming app.

The "mobile casino" is being rolled out progressively to the company's fleet & offers a range of slot, poker and table games, available for use in int'l waters.

Carnival Breeze, *Carnival Freedom* and *Regal Princess* now offer the app, with installs coming on P&O UK, Princess & HAL ships.

Maiden SkySea vessel

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises Ltd's Chinese joint venture SkySea Cruises will induct the former *Celebrity Century* as its first ship, renaming it *SkySea Golden Era*.

The 1,814-pax ship was bought last year by SkySea joint venture partner Ctrip.com (**CW** 04 Sep) and will conclude its life as part of the Celebrity Cruises fleet in Apr.

Following a refurb in Singapore aimed at preparing the ship for the Chinese market, with new restaurants, bars and attractions.

Magna Carta support

AN EXTREMELY rare facsimile copy of iconic governance document, the Magna Carta, will be displayed onboard Cunard's *Queen Victoria* and *Queen Mary 2* in honour of its 800th birthday.

Only four copies of the original document exist, one of which will be loaned to the line for display in its Grand Lobby from May-Sep, with special lectures to take place.

NCL gets its Samba on

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has delved deeper into the South American cruise market, opening a new sales office in Brazil.

The new presence in Sao Paulo will cater to growing numbers of Brazilian passengers onboard its ships and will see all three of the company's brands represented.

Record Regent sales

FORMER Regent Seven Seas Cruises passengers have flocked to book their staterooms on the line's new *Seven Seas Explorer*, setting new company records for single-day and first-week booking.

In fact, the first day exceeded the prior record three times over.

Staterooms open for general sale to non-former passengers, however Regent president Jason Montague said the maiden voyage is "nearly sold out".

Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest news from the cruising industry.

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Event Countdown

JUST four weeks to go until our second annual Cruise360 and 14th annual CLIA Cruise Industry Awards dinner.

A highlight for team CLIA in the lead up to the Awards dinner is making contact with all finalists to share the good news!

Our star Membership Chief (Amanda) had the task of making all the calls this year and I am sure I caught her tearing up after one of the most excited responses!

Making the top three or four in any category is a sensational achievement. Knowing what you are capable of certainly leads to a greater level of confidence and of course becomes inspiration to others around you.

After a one year absence, thanks to feedback from a wide range of journalists, we have re-introduced the media award this year and based on the high level of amazing stories that have been published we look forward to recognising finalists in this category again.

Regardless of the end result in any category, I'd encourage all finalists to ensure they actively promote their achievement.

Recognition as finalist is certainly something worth milking for as long as you can!

Overall voting from cruise lines this year was extremely close, so congratulations to all the finalists including those in our two new categories introduced this year, Online Agency of the Year and Home Based/Mobile Agent of the Year.



Schettino facing 26 years

DISGRACED *Costa Concordia* Captain Francesco Schettino is staring down the barrel of 26 years in prison for his role in the 2012 shipwreck, if Italian prosecutors are given their way.

According to summaries tabled in an Italian court, prosecutors said Schettino should receive 14 years for manslaughter, nine for abandoning the vessel and three months for lying in his testimony.

The *Costa Concordia* shipwreck off the coast of Giglio in Jan 2012

caused the deaths of 32 pax and crew after Schettino is alleged to have navigated too close to shore, hitting rocks and capsizing.

Prosecutors have also called for Schettino to be jailed immediately if convicted, to curtail any chance that he may flee the country.

The beleaguered former captain has been under house arrest near Naples during the trial so far.

An *Associated Press* report said chief prosecutor Maria Navarro accused Schettino of ensuring his own safety "without even getting his shoes wet".

In addition to criminal proceedings against Schettino, damages of €220 million are being sought by local authorities for environmental damage and the negative impact on tourism.

Salvage crews worked for more than two years to stabilise and parbuckle the vessel, eventually towing it to nearby Genoa where it is being scrapped (**CW** 24 Jul).

SeaLink web upgrade

CRUISING operator SeaLink says it has witnessed a sharp increase in the number of people accessing its website on mobile devices and that it is expecting its mobile web traffic to double.

The company has recently rolled out a major upgrade to its online offerings in the form of a new and responsive website optimised for viewing on desktop and mobiles.

SeaLink SA general manager Donna Gauci said mobile viewers even outnumber those accessing via desktops on some days.

"While people may organise a holiday from a desktop computer or mobile device at home, they're generally using mobile devices once their holiday has begun."

Sports bar not an EA

A **SPORTS** themed bar set to be installed on Carnival Spirit in Aug will not be branded as EA Sports after Carnival Cruise Lines ended its relationship with the marque.

The move will not affect sports bars currently in operation on other ships, only to those yet to be installed as part of FunShip 2.0 branded upgrades.

Dubai's busy weekend

FIVE cruise ships berthed at the same time at Dubai's Mina Rashid last week, providing 25,000 pax and crew to Dubai in one day and putting the facility to a major test.

Together, *Costa Serena*, *AIDA Diva*, *MSC Orchestra*, *Amadea* & *Costa neoRiviera* were all handled efficiently, resulting in praise from cruise port management.

"The success in handling five mega passenger vessels at one time demonstrates Dubai's ability to embrace the growth in cruise tourism and the readiness of the infrastructure at Mina Rashid," DP World chairman HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem commented.

Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* is set to arrive in the Arabian port today.

Webinar postponed

LINDBLAD Expeditions has advised it has had to reschedule its Alaska online training webinar due to the New York blizzard where its head office is located.

The session will now take place on Tue 03 Feb at 11am AEST.

Agents who already registered will be automatically moved to view on the rescheduled date.

CLICK HERE to sign up to view.



ANYBODY older than a child in the 1960's will probably tell you they could think of a better sight sitting in Cuba's harbour.

Amid the relaxation of trade & visitation embargoes lasting for decades, an American trade and diplomacy mission visiting Cuba were greeted by none other than a Russian spy ship.

The *Viktor Leonov* has been visiting Cuba unannounced a number of times over the last year, docking at a pier normally reserved for cruise ships.

The Russian intelligence ship has also been spotted in waters off the US East Coast and perhaps somewhat scarily, has been seen hovering around US nuclear missile facilities in Kings Bay, Georgia.

America is trying to rebuild shattered ties with Cuba which were broken in 1961 due to US/Soviet tensions and the Cuban Missile Crisis, a 13-day drama which nearly escalated into full-scale nuclear war.

Thankfully, this latest greeting by a Russian naval ship has been dismissed by the US Govt as "not unusual or alarming".

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