



RCI loyalty opens up

ROYAL Caribbean International has opened up membership of its Crown & Anchor Society loyalty program to everyone, even if an RCI cruise has not yet been taken.

Previously, membership to the program was automatically granted to pax upon taking their first voyage, with points accrued based on the length of the cruise.

Customers can now enrol ahead of time, with a balance of zero points applied until setting sail.

Members will receive exclusive news and access to special offers via a regular newsletter, however some features of the website won't be accessible until points start to be earned.

For more information or to enrol in the program, **CLICK HERE**.

Promech suspension

HOLLAND America Line has indefinitely suspended sales of shore excursions with Promech Air from Ketchikan, the operator which crashed in Alaska last week (**TD** Tue), killing eight pax & pilot.

China to get Golden

PRINCESS Cruises will send its *Golden Princess* vessel to China following its first Australian season in Melbourne, which will conclude on 04 Apr 2016.

The ship will operate out of Tianjin, near Beijing, for the Chinese summer before returning to the Vic capital again in 2016/17.

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New capacity at Silversea

HIGH-END cruise line Silversea Cruises had engaged Italian cruise ship construction firm Fincantieri to deliver a brand new luxury vessel to its ranks.

To become the ninth in the line's fleet, the new ship has been dubbed *Silver Muse* and will make its debut in Apr 2017.

At 40,000 GRT (Gross Registered Tonnage) *Silver Muse* will cater to 596 pax per sailing, described as "an exciting evolution of the *Silver Spirit* that will redefine ultra-luxury ocean travel.

Silversea's two-pronged operation currently comprises five all-suite vessels in *Silver Wind*, *Silver Cloud*, *Silver Shadow*, *Silver Spirit* and *Silver Whisper*.

A further three ships make up the Silversea Expeditions fleet in *Silver Explorer*, *Silver Galapagos* and *Silver Discoverer*.

Philippine cruise push

TALKS have been held between the Philippines Department of Tourism and a number of cruise lines regarding increasing the country's presence as a port of call on global cruise networks.

Speaking at a forum, Philippines Tourism Undersecretary Benito C. Bengzon Jr said the country had a two-pronged plan for cruise visits.

His vision involved appealing to major cruise operators to run itineraries in the region calling in Manila, and to secure a ship to homeport in Manila and operate an inter-island cruise circuit.

"Strategically, we stand to benefit more if we are able to convince these cruise ships to set up operations in the Philippines.

"We also want to have stronger presence in the major cruise events," Bengzon Jr added.

Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Int'l and Norwegian Cruise Lines have all previously indicated they would be willing to work to develop cruising in the Philippines region.

Silversea chairman Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio said the line has always had a special relationship with Fincantieri.

"Both companies have a clear understanding of what today's affluent traveller seeks, and each approaches the market with originality, creativity, and quality."

CEO Giuseppe Bono said the new vessel will allow the chance to develop creative solutions and "set new standards for shipbuilding in the ultra-luxury segment," with more details and specifications to be released soon.

Celestyal pax compo

MEDITERRANEAN cruise line Celestyal Cruises has outlined a number of compensatory steps being taken to assist pax on the voyage which crashed into a Turkish tanker last weekend.

Guests were transported to Istanbul and put up in hotels for two nights (**TD** Tue) before being transferred home or given the option of joining another ship.

All pax have been refunded and offered the chance to join another seven-day sailing FOC before the end of 2016.

Celestyal Crystal suffered damage to the bow in the crash, however all pax and crew on both ships were evacuated unharmed.

The line said repairs will need to be undertaken before it can safely return to service and continue with its scheduled itineraries.

RCI doubles the fun

GUESTS booking an interior stateroom before 31 Jul will receive a free double upgrade to a balcony cabin under a new offer launched by Royal Caribbean.

The promotion applies to new bookings of select Asia, Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific voyages from Aug 2015-Apr 2016.

A further US\$200 onboard credit will be applied on select *Explorer of the Seas* departures.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news & photos.

NCL brands a good fit

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings Ltd exec vice-president of int'l business development Harry Sommer says the line's three brands are all "a perfect fit" for the Australian market.

Under the guidance of Silversea Cruises veteran Steve Odell, NCL will support the growth of its three brands Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises in this market through a newly established office in Australia (**CW** breaking news).

The new operation will open its doors effective 01 Oct.



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Nguyen checks state of *Samatha*



VISITING Burma to inspect the progress of his newest “centre of culinary excellence” - *RV Samatha* - was APT Asia Ambassador and celebrity chef Luke Nguyen.

Joining the cooking whiz was APT global head of operations, innovation and procurement David Courage and Asia product manager Goldie Chong.

With the ship’s hull and interior offerings coming together day by day, Nguyen took charge of the situation in the kitchen, meeting

with shipbuilders about layout and catering requirements.

RV Samatha will debut as part of APT’s 2016/17 season, offering 30 suites per sailing, many with twin balconies.

Other facilities will include a pool, lounge areas, observation deck, a main restaurant and more.

Dinners served to guests onboard each evening have been personally designed by Nguyen.

In addition, an intimate eight-seat dining venue will offer an exclusive degustation menu also designed by the APT Ambassador.

During his stay in Burma, Nguyen embarked on a fact-finding mission on land to visit many local communities to discover the unique culture and inspirations behind Burmese cooking.

Nguyen is **pictured** above in front of the *RV Samatha* hull with David Courage.

Blue Lagoon bonuses

UP TO two free nights accom prior to or following a cruise is available under a new promotion from Blue Lagoon Cruises.

Bookings of a four-night sailing for two adults will earn one free night at the Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa in Denarau, with two free nights for a seven-night booking, both in an ocean-side room.

A three-night cruise will earn two nights accom at the Novotel Nadi Hotel in a deluxe room.

The promotion is valid for sales made by 31 Mar 2016 for sailings departing Nov 2015-Mar 2016 onboard the *Fiji Princess* vessel.

Azamara on Facebook

SPECIAL offers, fleet updates and the latest news on Azamara Club Cruises will feature on the line’s brand new Facebook page.

The page will be managed by the Australian Azamara team.



FANS of *The Walking Dead* television series & comic books can now indulge their passion on the seas onboard a three-day Norwegian Cruise Line departure to the Caribbean.

The sailing, departing from Miami and running from 15-18 Jan next year, is being organised by sea festival firm Sixthman on the *Norwegian Pearl*.

Stars from the show will be onboard the cruise, with a series of fan-friendly activities planned including Q&A sessions, photo opportunities, costume contests, autograph sessions, theme nights and many more events.

Cabins are now on sale, with a lithograph signed by Norman Reedus available to the first 1,000 guests booking a spot.

TUI orders two more

GERMAN firm TUI Cruises has placed an order for two new Mein Schiff vessels, which will be delivered in 2018 and 2019.

The ships will replace its oldest *Mein Schiff 1* and *Mein Schiff 2*.

Atlantic port rebrand

PRINCE Edward Island gateway Charlottetown has unveiled a CA\$5 million redevelopment plan to help it appeal better to cruise lines sailing in New England.

With the help of funding from Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the port will be renamed as Port Charlottetown, Marine Gateway to Prince Edward Island.

Ships will benefit from new bus access lanes as well as space for dockside merchants & pedestrian plaza within a new terminal.



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Wellbeing on ships

A **CRUISE** holiday is well known as one of the safest and most reliable forms of travel and the cruise industry is fully involved in continuous development of best practices when it comes to the safety, security and health of everyone on board a ship - guests and crew members alike.

When it comes to safety, a fact that is not widely known is that although rarely needed, ships must provide survival craft for 25% more guests than are actually onboard.

In addition to this, 100% of passengers, crew and luggage are screened prior to boarding.

Prevention of ill-health is paramount once onboard and it is with this in mind that cruise ships are regularly sanitised, from door handles and railings to cutlery and poker chips - and why they are so vigilant when it comes to the simple act of hand washing.

Whether on land or on a ship - this has been medically proven to prevent most viruses so there is no shame in highlighting to your guests the value in using the many antiseptic hand dispensers which are placed throughout cruise ships today.



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