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CRUISE



WEEKLY



Thursday 18 Jun 2015

Nitmiluk Gorge safari

A NEW small group safari cruise product has launched in Nitmiluk Gorge in Northern Territory, led by Nitmiluk Tours & Cicada Lodge.

The experience takes guests along the gorge system, learning about the local Jaowyn people.

Ovation cruises go on sale

ROYAL Caribbean International has today pressed the button to open sales of four itineraries from Australia onboard its newest ship *Ovation of the Seas*.

Going live from 9am, the biggest cruise ship to trail Aussie waters will make its first local call in Perth on 06 Dec 2016, arriving at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal on 15 Dec.

Following its repositioning cruise from Singapore - a voyage on sale exclusively as a charter through Cruiseco - *Ovation of the Seas* will embark on a 15-night cruise to New Zealand.

The 18-deck ship will first head south to Hobart before crossing the Tasman to Milford and Doubtful Sound, also calling at Dunedin, Wellington, Picton, Tauranga and Auckland.

Two more roundtrip departures to New Zealand are scheduled for the liner, a 10-night voyage and a 14-night sailing, prior to its return to Asia on another 14-night trip.

Fares for the maiden departure ex Sydney are currently listed as starting from \$2,751pp twin share however other voyages are on sale from \$1,667pp twin share.

Royal Caribbean International Australia & SE Asia commercial director Sean Treacy said he couldn't wait for Australians to experience the world's most advanced ship on our doorstep.

"In her first season alone, *Ovation of the Seas* is projected to inject more than \$20million

into the Australian economy with 14 total calls across the country, and almost 30,000 guests are expected to experience the new generation of cruise ship."

Onboard at any one time will be as many as 6,500 passengers and crew - double the populations of Aussie towns such as Margaret River and Airlie Beach.

While in Sydney, *Ovation of the Seas* is also the largest hotel in the city, offering triple the number of rooms as its closest rival, the Four Points by Sheraton.

Onboard are all the examples of a Quantum-class vessel, with guest activities including dodgem cars, a FlowRider surf simulator, circus school, onboard skydiving, the North Star capsule and more.

Eighteen dining options are available including Jamie's Italian and RCI favourites such as Chops Grille and Izumi Japanese, as well as the Dynamic Dining concept allowing total dining flexibility.

Guest wristbands handle most, if not all onboard functionality, replacing the traditional keycard for room entry and all purchases.

See the **front page of CW** today.

Promotion for Dr Liu

ROYAL Caribbean has promoted Dr Zinan Liu to the role of president of the China and North Asia Pacific region to continue spearheading its growth in China.

Liu is also currently the chairman of CLIA North Asia.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a front full page from **Royal Caribbean International**.

Europe in a mini guide

SCENIC has launched a pair of miniature brochures focusing on France and Russia to assist travel agents selling to clients.

Titled 'The Captivating Wonders of France and Portugal' and 'The Imperial Wonders of Russia', the guides detail some of Scenic's most popular itineraries.

To mark the release of the two mini-guides, Scenic is offering one free pre or post-tour hotel night valued at up to \$790 per couple for bookings made before 31 Jul.

Bay of Bengal luxury

A JOINT venture between Bangladesh Shipping Company & Afroz Shipping Lines will see the launch of the country's first home-grown river cruise line.

The new operation has not yet been given a name, however hopes to begin in Oct with a range of two-night leisure cruises in the Bay of Bengal.

A five-star ship offering a casino, restaurant, swimming pool and other facilities has been secured to deliver the cruises, the company says.

Plans to extend operations into SE Asia and the Middle East are also in the works for the future.



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QUEEN Mary will be turned into an all-new, even scarier and more chilling feast of fright for Halloween this year, organisers of the annual Dark Harbour say.

Each year, the organisation takes over the regal ship, which is permanently moored in Long Beach Harbour, to build the "Infamously Haunted Ship".

This year's side-show of freaks will feature on the *Queen Mary* from 01 Oct to 01 Nov, with a haunted maze, attractions and monsters roaming the vessel.

All the frights centre around the ship's youngest soul, known as Scary Mary, who suffered an untimely death by drowning in the ship's pool back in 1952.

Ticket prices for the Infamously Haunted Ship start from \$20 and can be booked online now.

Mystique Princess to return

BLUE Lagoon Cruises says the time is right for its popular *Mystique Princess* to return to service for the first time since the company merged with South Sea Cruises back in 2012.

Speaking to **CW** during this week's Fijian Tourism Expo, Blue Lagoon ceo Peter Duncan said the move was in response to "market demand," with bookings for sister ship *Fiji Princess* increasing to a point where the company is "already facing capacity issues on quite a number of departures".

The company is also seeing increased enquiry levels for special charters, Duncan said.

But don't hold your breath - the announcement confirmed that while concept plans have been drawn up, the proposal is that *Mystique Princess* will undergo a comprehensive makeover for the



next 18 months, with a re-launch scheduled for early 2017.

"At this point, I can tell you the makeover will be a thorough bow-to-stern that covers all on-board facilities, including an all-new decor for passenger cabins and the public areas of the ship."

Blue Lagoon Cruises has been undergoing a re-invigoration over the last few years since it merged with South Sea Cruises (**CW** 19 Jul 2012), with Duncan saying the decision to bring back *Mystique Princess* "will be warmly welcomed by our industry partners in our key markets around the world".

CCC heads north

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is seeing a shift in demographics for its popular Fiji cruise portfolio, and has adapted the product to suit.

Departures now include an on-board PADI dive team, meaning enthusiasts can experience the crystal clear waters of Fiji up to twice a day during their trips.

The mainstay product is still the three and four-night Mamanuca & Yasawa Islands voyages, which can be linked as a week-long trip.

Once each month, the *Reef Endeavour* heads further afield on either the 11-night "Remote North and Lau Group" itinerary, the 7-night Colonial Fiji Discovery Cruise or the 7-night Four Cultures Discovery Cruise.

Sales manager Zahid Khan told **CW** there was also demand from honeymooners or couples wanting to marry on secluded beaches.

The *Reef Endeavour* underwent a full makeover in 2013 following the acquisition of CCC's Australian operations by SeaLink.

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WINDOW: \$2558pp
BALCONY: \$2936pp

* Terms & conditions apply

For bookings & further information contact your preferred Travel Professional or visit www.starcruires.com



Vessel construction

THE International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, or SOLAS, is the international framework that governs safety features and requirements for cruise ships.

At the initial design stage, concepts and plans are developed in accordance with SOLAS safety requirements that govern details such as stability, materials, safety, electrical and fire prevention.

Plans are reviewed by the ship's designated classification society (that are independent inspectors) before construction can begin.

During construction, cruise ships are surveyed to ensure that construction complies with rigorous standards for structure, stability, propulsion, electrical and mechanical installations.

In the first year of a ship operating, inspections by the classification society are accelerated to ensure compliance of International Maritime Organisation (IMO) requirements which includes examining ship equipment and a full audit of operational procedures.

The average ship undergoes literally dozens of announced (and unannounced) safety inspections per year, involving hundreds of man-hours and covering thousands of specific requirements set by the IMO which are also supported through the cruise line's country of registration undertaking annual inspections and crew members participating in monthly fire and emergency drills - all designed with passenger safety as the cruise industry's #1 priority.



Virgin seeks dismissal

FLEDGLING cruise entity Virgin Cruises has sought dismissal of a lawsuit filed against it by former Norwegian Cruise Line ceo Colin Veitch (*CW* 17 Mar)

Virgin has filed papers to throw out the lawsuit, which alleges company founder Sir Richard Branson stole ideas for a viable cruise venture from Veitch and reneged on a profit share deal.

Veitch was seeking more than US\$300 million in damages.

The motion, filed at the start of Jun, says the collaboration between Virgin Cruises and Veitch was insufficient to constitute a formal working relationship which could even be considered as the basis for a credible lawsuit.

Virgin also said any agreement between the parties on revenue share was subject to changes.

Veitch claimed this was a loophole Virgin intended to use once it discovered the potential revenue available from cruising.

After announcing its plans to launch a cruise line, Virgin tabled potential ship designs in Mar.

MEANWHILE, reports in Italian media *Medi Telegraph* say Virgin Cruises is close to inking a deal with building firm Fincantieri for the construction of its two ships.

Un-Cruise 2016 plans

NEW journeys to the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica and Panama announced last year (*CW* 11 Dec) feature in the newly launched deployment schedule for 2016.

The guide details the operations of nine ships in Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, Columbia and Snake Rivers, Mexico, Hawaii and more in addition to the new territories.

Cruises run from 7-21 days and feature off-ship explorations, snorkelling and wildlife viewing.

Service by robot for Ecruising



SECONDS after finishing placing his order, Ecruising.travel founder and chairman Brett Dudley saw his cocktail creation mixed and served up by Royal Caribbean's robot bartenders during a tour of *Quantum of the Seas* in Singapore.

The entirely automated process on the futuristic ship takes about a minute from putting in an order to collecting the beverage.

Up to 1,000 drinks per day can be made by each of the two robots, which feature in their own bar on each of the three RCI Quantum-class ships.

Dudley found that technology is king on *Quantum of the Seas*, with everything from wayfinding

through to booking restaurants and shore excursions all digital and paid via a wristband.

"The wifi on-board is stronger than every cruise ship in the world put together," Dudley told *Cruise Weekly*, clearly impressed.

He enthused that upon the arrival to Sydney late next year of Quantum's sister ship Ovation of the Seas, a "whole new level of cruising" will be introduced to the Australian public.

Dudley is pictured above left on the ship tour with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd national sales manager Peter McCormack.

Learn Pandaw's story

PAPERBACK and e-book copies are now on sale of *The Pandaw Story* - an autobiographical look at the story behind the creation of Pandaw River Expeditions.

Written by company founder Paul Strachan, it tells the tale of the first commercial venture up the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar in 1995, through triumphs, new ship designs and setbacks through to the company's 20th anniversary celebrations in 2015.

Sunsail earlybird deal

SMALL yacht charter company Sunsail has launched an earlybird deal for Bareboat or Flotilla charters of seven or more.

Valid for sailings from 01 Nov to 30 Jul 2016, up to two free days are available on charters of ten nights or more, with one free day on bookings of 7-9 days.

The offer is valid on sailings out of peak dates in Turkey or Tahiti.

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