

# CRUISE



WEEKLY



Tuesday 17 Mar 2015

## Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of news & photos from across the cruise industry.

## Arison aids Vanuatu

**CARNIVAL** Corporation head office in Miami has doubled the \$150,000 contribution of Carnival Australia to cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu, with chairman Micky Arison adding a further \$150,000.

The donation takes the financial contribution from Carnival Corp to \$300,000, with essential supplies also being forwarded.

Arison's contribution is being made through the Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation, the input praised by Carnival Australia ceo Ann Sherry.

"We are very grateful to Mr Arison and his family foundation for this wonderful gesture, which will have an immediate and positive effect on the relief effort now underway in Vanuatu."

Carnival Cruise Lines was also coordinating a multi-pronged relief effort by delivering supplies and collecting donations onboard.

*Carnival Legend*, which departed Sydney on Sun, is currently on its way to the country laded with bottled water and an electricity generator for delivery to Santo.

The passenger itinerary has been modified, with Santo in for Port Vila and Lifou replacing the stop at Mystery Island.

**MEANWHILE**, a scheduled visit to Port Vila by P&O *Pacific Dawn* tomorrow has been cancelled.

## Cruising to NTIA victory

**THE** release of the National Travel Industry Award nominations for 2015 this morning has seen significant new opportunities for the industry to celebrate cruising excellence.

Revamped NTIA categories include the new Best Cruise Ship - Domestic Deployment award - which for the first time enable specific cruise vessels operating in local waters to be recognised for their high standards.

The industry seems to have been quick to embrace the new category, with nominations from across the board including P&O's *Pacific Aria*, *Pacific Eden*, *Pacific Jewel* and *Pacific Dawn*.

They have been joined by fellow Carnival Australia brand Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Spirit* and *Carnival Legend*, while Princess Cruises' *Diamond Princess* is also nominated - the only Princess ship to be on the list.

Rival Royal Caribbean has also

joined the fray with *Voyager of the Seas*, *Rhapsody of the Seas* and *Radiance of the Seas*.

Sister RCCL brand Celebrity Cruises rates a mention with the nomination of *Celebrity Solstice*.

Other nominees include Lindblad Expeditions' *National Geographic Orion* which ironically won't be cruising in Australasian waters soon after it is redeployed by its parent firm (**CW** 09 Jan).

The final nominee in this category is North Star Cruises, with its *True North* on the list.

Also being hotly contested is the category of Best River Cruise Operator, with perennial nominees APT, Uniworld, Avalon Waterways, Scenic Tours and Evergreen Tours joined by The American Queen Steamboat Company, Tauck & Viking Cruises.

With the release of the nominations, the NTIA now moves to the next stage, with formal voting kicking off on the AFTA website tomorrow morning from 9am AEST.

**CLICK HERE** to view the full list.

## Update on Port Vila

**CARNIVAL** Australia says it will be "guided by local authorities" as to when it can resume visits to Port Vila cruise port in Vanuatu.

"We want to resume as soon as it is feasible because cruise tourism is vital to the Vanuatu economy," a spokesperson said.

Royal Caribbean Int'l told **CW** it had not yet modified any sailings & was working with local partners to ensure any visits helped locals.

## Radio gong for Micro

**SMALL-SHIP** wholesaler Micro-Cruising has been recognised by Sydney radio station 2GB as the winner of its Small Business Success Award for Mar.

Founder Nicola Caygill accepted the award during an interview with 2GB finance guru Ross Greenwood - **CLICK HERE** to hear.

## Harmony's Euro start

**BARCELONA** will first welcome Royal Caribbean's new vessel *Harmony of the Seas* just prior to its debut from Port Everglades.

The ship will sail seven-night circuits from the port to the Western Mediterranean, also offering embarkation in Rome.

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### Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY	
<i>MSC Orchestra</i>	17 Mar
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	18 Mar
<i>Sun Princess</i>	19 Mar
<i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i>	20 Mar
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	20 Mar
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	22 Mar
<i>Oosterdam</i>	22 Mar
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	23 Mar
MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	18 Mar
<i>Costa Deliziosa</i>	18 Mar
<i>MSC Orchestra</i>	20 Mar
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	21 Mar
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	22 Mar
BRISBANE	
<i>Sea Princess</i>	18 Mar
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	21 Mar
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	21 Mar
ADELAIDE	
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	17 Mar
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	19 Mar
<i>MSC Orchestra</i>	22 Mar
DARWIN	
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	18 Mar
<i>Ocean Princess</i>	22 Mar
CAIRNS	
<i>Ocean Princess</i>	18 Mar
PORT DOUGLAS	
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	21 Mar
FREMANTLE	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	22 Mar
<i>Costa Deliziosa</i>	22 Mar
GERALDTON	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	23 Mar
AUCKLAND	
<i>Queen Victoria</i>	19 Mar
<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	20 Mar
<i>Sea Princess</i>	22 Mar
WELLINGTON	
<i>Queen Victoria</i>	17 Mar
<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	18 Mar
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	19 Mar
TAURANGA	
<i>Sea Princess</i>	23 Mar
PICTON	
<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	17 Mar
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	20 Mar

## Quest back to Aus in '18

**AZAMARA** Club Cruises has announced it will bring one of its two vessels, *Azamara Quest*, back to Australia for a second season in local waters in 2018.

The move was confirmed last night by Azamara president Larry Pimentel, currently in Australia ahead of the Cruiseco conference in Melbourne later this week, who said passenger numbers from Australia had skyrocketed 767% in recent years.

"Australia represents 24% of the business," he said, adding there were currently over 20,000 members of the Le Club Voyage loyalty program in Australia.

*Azamara Quest* will make its first ever call in Australia in Darwin on 28 Dec 2015, operating a short series of sailings in the Great Barrier Reef, circumnavigations of both Australia and New Zealand & a repositioning cruise to Asia.

Ahead of its arrival in Dec and the arrival of sister-ship *Azamara Journey* in 2017, both ships will receive a major makeover of its onboard facilities, beginning with *Quest* in Sep, with *Journey* in Jan.

Pimentel said that as part of the

newly announced 2018 season, *Azamara Quest* will hold pride of place in Sydney Harbour for the New Year's Eve fireworks celebrations to ring in 2019.

In addition, the line has detailed the inclusions for three of its signature AzAmazing Evenings - which take guests off the ship in select ports for a special cultural showpiece event - which will be offered during Australian voyages.

More from Azamara Club Cruises in **Cruise Weekly** on Thu.

### Cruising into Phenix

**TRAVEL** Counsellors has built dynamic wholesale cruise pricing and booking functionality into its Phenix reservations system as part of a newly unveiled update.

The refresh also allows the company's agents to book flights on a range of low-cost carriers.

Hayley Voll, a Travel Counsellor based in Brisbane, commented that "being able to see live availability is a great feature of the system, which will ultimately save time and allow me to turn around bookings more quickly".

The company says Phenix is the only system enabling agents to access wholesale cruise pricing.

### Princess' curtains up

**FOUR** new stage show musicals will be developed for Princess Cruises under a new pact signed with renowned composer Stephen Schwartz - the only songwriter in Broadway history to reach 1,900 performances by three shows.

The multi-year deal will see Schwartz - the mind behind shows such as *Wicked*, *Godspell* and more - oversee development of the shows, which will be rolled out to the fleet in coming years.

Schwartz is already hard at work and has announced his first production will be entitled *Magic To Do* - a showcase of his most famous stage songs and offering a new song written just for the line.

The show will debut on Crown Princess in the northern autumn.

### MSC arrives in Sydney

**MSC** Cruises was forced to cancel its first-ever visit to an Australian port due to a tropical low-pressure storm cell forming off the coast of Queensland.

Cairns was due to be the line's maiden stop in Australia during its 33-day Grand Voyage from Dubai to Perth, with Bali the most recent stop before it was due in the North Qld port last Fri 13 Mar.

"This step, taken in consultation with the Australian Maritime Authorities, was necessary to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of all guests and crew members - our number one priority at all times," a statement on the line's Facebook page read.

*MSC Orchestra* tied up today in Sydney where it will remain for an overnight stay before continuing on to Melbourne and Adelaide before the voyage ends in Perth.



AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES

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## Celebrity dish up gourmet nosh



**TASTEBUDS** owned by visitors to the Taste of Sydney Festival were taken around the world over the weekend at the Celebrity Cruises pavilion, treated to hints of the gourmet offerings onboard.

The line has recruited a former contestant of Channel 10 cooking program *MasterChef* in Mindy Woods, who conducted three Masterclasses in pairing delicacies with complementary wines.

Kicking off hourly, guests were first treated to Spanish cuisine, with later sessions focusing on French and Italian handiwork,

each session priced at \$5pp.

Woods regaled the crowd with details of her recent sailing onboard Celebrity Cruises, telling of the high culinary standard and quality of service by the crew.

She mentioned that each of the speciality restaurants found on Celebrity Cruises ships offered the services of an expert sommelier to find the perfect wine to match the course being served.

Representatives from the line were also on hand to answer the more general questions about the line and its array of voyages across different regions, as well as the selection of restaurants.

Celebrity's involvement in the Taste of Sydney festival followed a strong reception to its presence last year, with each class again seeing a popular response.

Travel and foods of the world again formed a major part of the festival, with representations by Tourism Authority of Thailand, among many more.

**Pictured** above from left in the giant Celebrity Cruises deck chair is Claire Pillans, Celebrity Cruises; *MasterChef* Mindy Woods and Harriet Gilmore, Celebrity Cruises.

**CLICK HERE** for more photos.

## Virgin Cruises sued

**ALLEGATIONS** that Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Cruises venture stole the ideas for its planned ships from former Norwegian Cruise Line boss Colin Veitch will soon be heard in a US court.

Veitch has filed papers in a Miami court accusing Branson of stealing his proposals and backing out of a 2011 profit share deal.

He is seeking more than US\$300m in damages and an injunction stopping Virgin Cruises from proceeding with his ideas.

Virgin said it will defend the claims, saying it ended talks with Veitch in 2012 but had been planning an entry into the cruise industry since the late 1970's.

Veitch was the chief executive officer & president of Norwegian Cruise Line from 2000 until 2008.

## Merger drives growth

**LINDBLAD** Expeditions' merger partner Capitol Acquisition Corp II has outlined plans to construct at least two new expedition vessels over the next three years on completion of its merger plan and ambitions for long-term growth.

Chairman Mark Ein has told investors that acquisitions of new ships and expanded charters will also be on the drawing board to boost the line's six ship fleet.

One ship will be intended for delivery in 2017, with a second scheduled for the year following, and both around the same size as the current fleet of Nat Geo ships.

The exploration line announced last week its plan to merge with Capitol Acquisition Corp II and to list on the NASDAQ stock market.

**MEANWHILE**, Lindblad has also confirmed it will continue its strategic relationship with National Geographic until "at least through 2025".



**LUXURY** accommodation brand Four Seasons already has its own Boeing 747 which is used for high-end charter itineraries, but did you know it had its own cruise ship as well?

The *Four Seasons Explorer* is an 11-cabin catamaran owned jointly by the Four Seasons' two Maldives resorts, operating voyages of three, four and seven nights.

Onboard the three-deck floating palace, guests have an experience akin to a private yacht with massage services, private chef & a cruise director planning exclusive shore trips.

All the opulence does come with a price tag in line with the finest facilities associated with the Four Seasons name, with the daily cruise rate coming in at US\$19,000 per day, or \$16,000 per day in low season.

**WHALE** watching took on a scary new meaning recently after a tourist was killed when one of the mammals literally jumped onto the sightseeing boat she was travelling in.

The Canadian tourist was holidaying in the Mexican beach town of Cabo San Lucas when the surfacing gray whale inexplicably leapt from the water onto the boat.

The 35-year-old woman, who was on holidays in the region with her family, was rushed to the shore by water authorities for treatment but tragically died from her injuries later that day, while two other tourists sustained significant injuries.

## Drug mules on NCL

**FIVE** galley crew members on Norwegian Cruise Line have been arrested trying to traffick seven kilos of cocaine into the US.

Investigators tracked the five men to a nearby hotel upon their disembarkation from *Norwegian Sun* during turnaround in Tampa, making the arrest on their return.

Authorities will allege the men picked up the haul during a port call in Honduras, concealing it in their underwear on re-boarding.

The five are in federal custody charged with drug smuggling.

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