

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 14 May 2015

Pax back to Mystery

TWO months after the jetty on Mystery Island in Vanuatu was torn apart by Cyclone Pam, cruise ships have returned to the island.

A temporary jetty has been constructed by locals ahead of a more permanent structure planned for later this year.

Carnival Spirit was the first to return yesterday, with locals setting up markets & taking tours. *Pacific Dawn* will visit today.

Cruise ships up for NTIAs

FIVE cruise vessels from five lines will battle it out for the new National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) category of Best Cruise Ship - Domestic Deployment, according to the NTIA finalists list issued by AFTA yesterday.

Carnival Spirit and *Diamond Princess* represent the Carnival Australia stable, and will be up against *Voyager of the Seas*, *Radiance of the Seas* & *Celebrity Solstice* from RCCL.

The category has been changed this year to hone in on particular ships, not a locally based line.

Carnival Cruise Line missed out as a finalist for Best Cruise Operator - International Deployment, with this category to be contested by Celebrity Cruises, Silversea, Princess Cruises, Royal Caribbean International and Holland America Line.

APT and Scenic will go head-to-head in the stakes for new award Best River Cruise Operator plus the Best Tour Operator Domestic and International categories.

Further nominees for Best River Cruise Operator are Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, Viking and Avalon Waterways.

Cruise is also represented in the individual award categories.

Brenton Reidy from P&O Cruises has been named as a finalist in the Rookie of the Year - Supplier category, up against names from G Adventures, Topdeck, Busabout and Cover-More Travel Insurance.

The 2015 NTIA Gala Dinner will take place at the Dockside Pavilion at Darling Harbour, Sydney on Sat 18 Jul.

RCI adding scrubbers

FOUR vessels in Royal Caribbean International's fleet will be retrofitted with scrubbing technology as part of the line's effort to reduce carbon emissions.

The line has ordered four units of the Alfa Laval PureSOx exhaust gas cleaning systems.

Targets for the systems will be *Freedom of the Seas*, *Liberty of the Seas*, *Independence of the Seas* and *Adventure of the Seas*.

The hybrid systems work by inducing seawater into either an open-loop or closed-loop rotation near the ship's funnel, creating a chemical reaction where exhaust gases are treated, removing any pollutants prior to discharge.

Scenic ambassador

SCENIC today announced that TV presenter Catriona Rowntree will be its ambassador across its product portfolio for the next 12 months in Australia and NZ.

The move continues the longstanding relationship between Scenic and Rowntree, who is godmother of *Scenic Sapphire* which launched in 2008.

The presenter will appear across various elements of the firm's 2015/16 marketing, with Scenic's Michelle Black saying Rowntree is a "perfect fit for the brand".

Markets now on sale

BEYOND Travel has launched its first river itineraries taking in the 2015 Europe Christmas markets.

Cruises departing from Vienna and Cologne are among the range on sale, with cabins priced from \$1,080ppts - phone 1300 363 554.

Mega issue of CW!

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus full pages from: (**click**)

- Travel Industry Exhibition
- AA Appointments

Legend teaser coming

AHEAD of its debut season in Brisbane beginning from Dec, Royal Caribbean Int'l is bringing *Legend of the Seas* to Queensland next month as part of its repositioning voyage to Singapore.

The 2,000-passenger ship will arrive in the Qld capital on 13 Jun before heading up the coast to visit Airlie Beach on 15 Jun and Cairns on 16 Jun.

Royal Caribbean's first ship to be homeported in Queensland will operate a 17-cruise season beginning from Dec, with bookings for all voyages open.

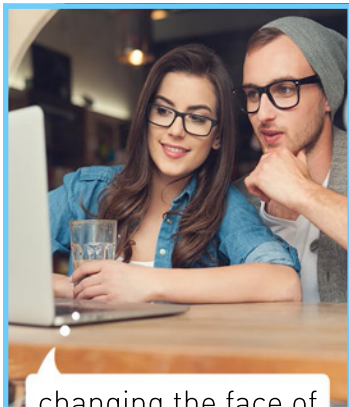
"*Legend of the Seas* will bring more than \$24 million into the Queensland economy in 2015 and 2016, including more than \$20.6 million to Brisbane," RCI commercial chief Sean Treacy said.

Itineraries will include nine departures to the South Pacific, a 14-night cruise to New Zealand and cruises up the Qld coastline to the Whitsundays and Cairns.

Princess noro cases

AROUND 30 passengers part of a Princess Cruises sailing to Hawaii from San Francisco were quarantined in their rooms in Lahaina after coming down with symptoms of norovirus.

Staff on *Star Princess* instigated a deep clean process, aiming to eradicate the contagious gastrointestinal bug.



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Homeport in Mexico

CONSTRUCTION is halfway to completion on a major US\$100m cruise homeport project taking place in Puerto Penasco, Mexico, with cruise ships expected to start docking in less than two years.

The port is expected to generate a significant boom in tourism to the Sea of Cortez, with officials saying the aim will be to secure a major ship to base itself there.

Located close to the city's tourist strip, the port will be around 1.6km long, capable of handling up to 3,000 pax per ship.

Lindblad closes deal

DEBT financing contracts to fund Lindblad Expeditions' plans to embark on a significant fleet expansion have been signed.

The expedition line's merger partner Capitol Acquisition Corp II confirmed also that the finance amount was increased from US\$120 million to \$150 million.

Existing stakeholder have been bought out and regulatory papers have been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The merger between Lindblad and Capitol is expected to be finalised in the coming weeks.

Agents win onboard sales

LUXURY tour operator APT is weighing up whether a trial of onboard sales desks for repeat clients will be made permanent, however travel agents will stand to benefit most if it does.

The company recently told *CW* the desks were a hit with guests enjoying their APT experience so much they wished to book again.

Around 70 bookings were received by APT from the trial, all of which were sent on directly to the client's local travel agent, a move well received by the trade.

Those expressing interest at the desk were also followed up by their agents, with a 5% discount for their next trip on the table for 30 days after their holiday ended.

APT commercial manager retail Susan Haberle said the service was about opening doors to other

areas served by APT once pax had already experienced the product.

In fact, so strong is the repeat client rate by APT, average lead booking times were starting to shorten, the company said.

MEANWHILE, APT has confirmed the 2015 Top Achievers reward trip for its best selling agents over the year will be a river cruise on the Douro in Portugal.

The trip departs on 22 Aug and will include three nights in Lisbon followed by the seven night cruise from Lisbon to Barca d'Alva, which concludes in Madrid.

TNZ appeals to yachts

TOURISM New Zealand has rolled out the welcome mat to private and commercial yacht owners at the 2015 Singapore Yacht Show in Sentosa Cove.

Yachting is a growing niche market for New Zealand, which saw 57 vessels cruising its waters over the 2014/15 peak season.

Puerto Vallarta safety

TOURISM officials in the Mexican beach resort town of Puerto Vallarta have reassured cruise operators the town is safe after recent civil unrest.

Earlier this week, Disney Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises and Royal Caribbean all cancelled scheduled port visits on *Disney Wonder*, *Celebrity Infinity* and *Jewel of the Seas* respectively as a precaution on shoreside reports.

All three ships replaced the port call with a day at sea, refunding excursions and associated taxes.

The Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board said the matter has been resolved with no repeat reported.

Carnival shows Vista

TRAVEL the World has released the first brochure showcasing the soon-to-be newest member of the Carnival Cruise Line global fleet - *Carnival Vista*.

The new ship, which also marks Carnival's return to Europe, will feature a range of new activities and entertainment including a pedal-powered Skyride above the top deck and sizeable water park, IMAX theatre and 3D experience.

Set to debut from May next year, *Carnival Vista* will begin life with an opening season in Barcelona prior to relocating to Port Miami in Florida.

Inaugural itineraries available will see the ship offer 8-13 day tours of the Mediterranean, visiting Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Spain, France and more.

The full range of Fun Ship 2.0 activities and entertainment will also feature onboard the ship.

CLICK HERE to view the guide.

Windstar feels Breeze

THE second of three renovated small ships bought by Windstar Cruises from Seabourn has been christened in Nice, France.

More than US\$9m has been spent on the 212-passenger *Star Breeze* to fit the Windstar product which includes a new observation Yacht Club area, new screening room and outdoor dining venue.

Tiwi Islands cruise

SEALINK has launched a new three-day voyage allowing guests to explore the remote Tiwi Islands off the Northern Territory coast.

The product is available for a limited 10-week season from Jul-Sep, for 12 people per departure.

CLICK HERE for booking details.

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SINCE 9/11 and the consequent fall of cruise pricing, fares have generally been based on an industry model of sailing at 100% occupancy – meaning that to make a profit, cruise lines staked their bets on onboard spend.

The result, along with the apprehension of increasing prices against an extremely competitive market, has resulted in current day cruise rates being undervalued and disproportionate to what clients receive. They are getting a bargain that historically is at its best!

Top cruise executives have transparently declared that to survive, we as an industry need to gain a more parallel price margin to what the client is actually getting.

Many lines have now implemented a 'stop cutting prices on close-in sailing dates' policy.

This new model of ridding last-minute pricing has become increasingly important because cruise lines admit late discounting undermines their previous 9/11 marketing assertions that only by booking early will passengers get the best fares.

3-4 day cruises will be the last to change which ironically depend on this staggered approach, but the pledge is coming into vogue with the commercial decision makers.

This model is not an option, it IS happening. It's time to get your client on a cruise NOW before prices increase to something that is a little fairer on the product that is providing the ultimate holiday service for your patrons.



Princess shares in agent milestone



FLIGHT Centre national product manager - cruise Deb Toohey found herself becoming a major part of Princess Cruises' year of 50th birthday parties, sharing her own milestone with the line.

Princess covertly arranged with Toohey's colleagues in Brisbane to throw a surprise birthday party at Stokehouse restaurant, a move worked to perfection, catching Toohey totally by surprise.

Senior sales staff from Princess were in attendance at the lunch, including head of sales Brett Wendorf, who said the line was always keen to share its 50th birthday with its trade partners sharing a similar milestone.

"Flight Centre and Deb are great supporters of ours and to have

somebody so special to us both commercially and personally share our birthday made this such a wonderful occasion," Wendorf said at the surprise party.

Toohey is **pictured** above third from left with Helen Mezzan, Brett Wendorf, Trevor Thwaites and Peter Darby, all from Princess Cruises and Jan Harrington from Flight Centre Cruise Contract.

Dream Yacht expands

THREE new 62-foot Lagoon 620 double-deck catamarans will be added to the Dream Yacht Charter fleet next year, available to hire on dedicated cruise charters in Tahiti, the line has announced.

TUI brands merging

THOMSON Cruises and Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, both part of TUI Cruises, will soon be brought under its parent banner brand.

According to a research paper from investment firm Morgan Stanley, the move is aimed at synergising sales efforts.

MEANWHILE, TUI Cruises has also taken delivery of its second new ship, dubbed *Mein Schiff 4*.

Virgin Islands extends

THOUSANDS of extra visitors from cruise ships are expected in the British Virgin Islands following the extension of the cruise pier.

The British Caribbean territory is already expecting a 21% increase in visitor numbers through more frequent visits from Norwegian Cruise Line & Disney Cruise Line.

Remember Lusitania

PASSENGERS onboard Cunard's Queen Victoria have cast four wreaths at sea to remember those lost or injured in the sinking of former Cunard vessel *Lusitania*, which sank 100 years ago.

The ceremony took place at the site where the ship was torpedoed by a German U-Boat, resulting in the loss of 1,195 lives.

A memorial to *Lusitania* was also unveiled at the Old Church Cemetery in Cobh, Ireland, with the names of all victims inscribed.



HERE'S a booze cruise with a real difference.

The American Queen Steamboat Company is running an eight-night bourbon-themed voyage, with the all-American cruise departing from St Louis -naturally - on the fourth of July.

The "Insider's Bourbon Trail" sailing will travel up the Ohio River, with highlights including shore excursions taking in the distilleries that make Jim Beam, Wild Turkey, Woodford Reserve, Buffalo Trace and Four Roses bourbons.

In between there will be plenty of on-board tastings and lectures by Michael Veach, the author of a weighty tome titled *Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey - An American Heritage*.

Meals on board will include "bourbon-enhanced menu items," as well as nightly bourbon-themed gifts.

Fares start at US\$2,699 per person including all shore tours - and wine and beer with dinner (not that anyone will be drinking that kind of rubbish).

Cruise Weekly is Australia's leading travel industry cruise publication. An industry-focused PDF edition of Cruise Weekly is published every Tue and Thu, and there's also a consumer-facing email newsletter published each Wed - sign up free at www.cruiseweekly.com.au.

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