

CRUISE



WEEKLY



Tuesday 26 May 2015

Cunard birthday bash

THREE days of celebrations have begun in Liverpool for Cunard, marking 175 years since the cruise line was first formed.

In a stunning nautical display, the line's three vessels *Queen Victoria*, *Queen Mary 2* and *Queen Elizabeth* joined together on the Mersey river, performing a synchronised 180° turn in unison.

At the mid-point of the turn, the three Queens were spread across the river, followed by '175' sounded on the QM2's horns - one blast, followed by seven and five more, concluded with a fly-over by the Red Arrows.

"This moment has brought the relationship between Cunard and the Mersey alive, and that together, Liverpool and Cunard have paid tribute to the people who have created our 175 years of shared history," Cunard president Richard Meadows said.

CLICK HERE for a time lapse video and **CLICK HERE** for photos.

Million pax mark passed

AUSTRALIA has become the first nation worldwide in the history of cruising to exceed 4% market penetration, with 4.2% of all Australians taking a cruise holiday last year, official statistics released this morning show.

Six years ahead of originally forecast, the one-million cruise pax barrier has also been broken, with CLIA Australasia announcing today that 1,003,256 Australians set sail on a cruise in 2014.

The figure was an astonishing 20.4% improvement on 2013, irrefutable proof of the lure of cruising in the Australian market.

Australia continues to be the fastest growing market worldwide for cruising, outpacing France which was the only other major nation to record a double-digit growth rate, itself up 13.6%.

On a global basis, Australia is now the fourth largest source market for cruise pax, making up

4.5% of the world's passengers.

Broken down by region, the South Pacific was overwhelmingly the most popular destination to cruise, with 39% of all Aussie pax or 392,549 visiting the region.

NSW was the dominant state in Australia, accounting for 41% of the national cruise market.

Europe is also growing markedly and remains the leading long-haul destination, with Australian pax numbers doubling in the last three years to hit 93,529 in 2014.

Aussies spent 10 million sea days over the year, with cruises of 8-14 days duration most popular.

Of particular note was a sharp increase in short voyages, with the 0-4 day category seeing a 59% spike in pax numbers, while 5-7 days climbed 31% year-on-year.

"These figures show that more and more Australians are realising cruising is an easy, relaxing way to holiday which represents incredible value for money," CLIA Australasia chair Gavin Smith said.

River cruising again stood out, exploding in popularity by 62% year-on-year worldwide, with Europe up 66% alone.

From a base of only 25,506 Aussies travelling on river cruises just five years earlier, this figure skyrocketed to 79,530 last year.

Looking to the next major target, CLIA Australasia said it was now aiming to reach two million pax by 2020, which would require annual growth of 12.5% over the next six years to accomplish.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Russian river savings

EARLYBIRD prices for river cruises between St Petersburg and Moscow have been released by Russian Travel Centre, sailing onboard the *MS Volga Dream*.

Savings up to 31% are on offer for departures in a deluxe double stateroom in Jul & Aug 2016, priced from \$4,451pp twin share.

Book by 31 Jul - 1300 668 844.

Hurtigruten doubles

YOUNGER guests are being wooed to Hurtigruten's Antarctica program for 2016-17 with a host of new entertainment including an interactive science lab.

The polar cruise line has added a second ship - the *MS Midnatsol* - to Antarctica for the season, joining the *MS Fram*.

MS Midnatsol will be based in Punta Arenas, exploring the Chilean Fjords, while *MS Fram* will remain based from Ushuaia.

RCI's SkySea sets sail

SKYSEA Cruises, a joint venture between Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd and Ctrip.com aimed at the Chinese market, has set sail from Shanghai on its maiden voyage.

The line's maiden ship *SkySea Golden Era* - formerly known as *Celebrity Century* - headed to Jeju in Korea for its inaugural port call.



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Cruise Calendar

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

SYDNEY	<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	27 May
BRISBANE	<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	30 May
FREMANTLE	<i>Sea Princess</i>	29 May
DARWIN	<i>Oceanic Discoverer</i>	28 May
	<i>Silver Discoverer</i>	29 May
BUSSELTON	<i>Sea Princess</i>	28 May
AUCKLAND	<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	27 May

SuperStar Virgo to visit

STAR Cruises' flagship *SuperStar Virgo* will visit Australian waters for the first time in a decade later this year, with the vessel taking in several Aussie ports during an "epic" 48-day voyage.

Scheduled to depart from Hong Kong on 13 Nov 15, the ship will call at ports including Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Fremantle as well as Bali, Jakarta, Bangkok, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City and more.

Staterooms on the cruise can also be purchased in shorter segments such as Hong Kong/Singapore/Fremantle, Fremantle/Sydney or Sydney/Hong Kong.

"As a pioneer in the Asia Pacific cruise industry, we have seen the appetite for longer cruise

itineraries grow in popularity with our Asian and Australian cruisers in recent years, and have responded by offering large scale journeys for our guests," said Star Cruises vice president of sales Braydon Holland.

"We are thrilled to have Australia play such an important role in this inaugural itinerary," Holland added.

He said Star Cruises was keen to reacquire Australian cruisers with *Virgo*, which was refurbished in 2012, along with the line's "acclaimed Asian hospitality".

Star Cruises has been operating in the region since 1993, and the 1,974 lower berth *Virgo* offers more than 13 restaurants and bars with a full range of Asian and international cuisine which will reflect the "multi-cultural bounty of the various destinations dotting the itinerary".

The voyage returns to Hong Kong on 31 Dec 2015.

RCI back-to-back deal

SAVINGS of up to \$500 per cabin are available from Royal Caribbean if booking two eligible sailings in Asia consecutively.

A range of voyages are included in the deal, such as an eight-night Hong Kong to Singapore voyage leading into a 14-night Singapore to Sydney sailing - book by 14 Jun.

Ponant polar season

EIGHTEEN months ahead of departure, Ponant has opened sales for its 2016-17 Antarctica season, which runs from Nov 2016 to Feb 2017 on three ships.

Over the season, 16 departures packed with excursions will run on *Le Boreal*, *Le Soleal* & *Le Lyrial*.

Six months to two grand arrivals



THE countdown is approaching rapidly to P&O Cruises welcoming its two newest ships, with less than six months now until *Pacific Aria* & *Pacific Eden* join the fleet.

A grand celebration is planned for 25 Nov, when *Aria* and *Eden* will join *Pacific Dawn*, *Pacific Pearl* and *Pacific Jewel* in a five-ship spectacle in Sydney Harbour.

The two new additions will

spearhead the total revamp of the P&O brand, which sees new dining, entertainment, shopping, bars and more fitted fleet-wide.

The P&O executive team is pictured above with the date firmly marked in their calendars, from left is Matthew Rutherford, Sture Myrmell, Amanda McClelland, Ken Flavell, Brett Annable and Thomas Karlsson.

Longer in Caribbean

ONE additional overnight stay on selected Caribbean voyages will feature on 40 Celebrity Cruises itineraries from Jan next year.

Cruises of 10 days or more will offer the extra overnight in ports such as Aruba, Cozumel, St Maarten, Curacao or Barbados.

CMV round the world

CRUISE & Maritime Voyages has released its first Round-The-World sailing onboard its newly acquired vessel *Magellan*.

Departing London Tilbury on 05 Jan 2017, the 120-day sailing will travel west-bound, including a visit to Australasia, with the voyage also available for sale in nine shorter segments.



WAITING on hold or in line for Centrelink is never pleasant, however some pax may have slightly enjoyed this mix-up.

According to the *Cruise Critic Australia* forum, an immigration glitch resulted in thousands of cruise passengers marked as still being overseas, which led to their welfare and concession entitlements being suspended.

The cruise in question was a *Diamond Princess* sailing from Bali to Sydney, which docked at the OPT on 27 Mar.

Officials failed to correctly file the arrival cards, meaning the pax were still listed as being onboard the ship and therefore still on their holidays...or at least not returning to Australia.

One passenger was unable to collect important medication due to the bungle, resulting in a two-hour call to Centrelink.

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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