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CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 15 Oct 2015

Cruise Weekly today

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

Uniworld on a wave

CHAMPAGNE corks are still popping at Uniworld Boutique River Cruise headquarters after the line picked up a trio of gongs in the annual *Cruise Critic* awards including Best River Cruise Line.

See the **front full page** of today's *Cruise Weekly* for more details.

China brand increase

CARNIVAL Corporation will increase its presence in China to four of its ten brands from 2017, with Carnival Cruise Line and AIDA Cruises set to deploy ships.

Specific details and itineraries for the two lines' operations in China are yet to be revealed.

Costa Cruises, which has based at least one ship in China since 2006, and Princess Cruises which recently added *Sapphire Princess*, will make up remaining capacity.

The new deployments were announced this week by Carnival Corporation ceo Arnold Donald during a visit to Shanghai.

"We look forward to even more Chinese travellers enjoying vacations on our AIDA and Carnival brands," Donald said.

AIDA Cruises president Felix Eichhorn said the line was looking forward to offering Chinese guests "our authentic AIDA experience of German style on the seas".

Cruise critical of NZ levy

AUSTRALIA'S two largest cruise operators, Carnival Australia and RCL Cruises Ltd, have expressed their displeasure at confirmation by the New Zealand Government to press ahead with its Border Clearance Levy (*CW* 16 Sep).

The new charge will impact all NZ arrivals effective 01 Jan 2016, at the rate of NZ\$26.22 for cruise visitors and NZ\$21.57 per air passenger, with the money collected to be used to fund border services previously paid for by New Zealand taxpayers.

The move is expected to put further pressure on cruise fares for voyages arriving in NZ.

A spokesperson for Carnival Australia told *Cruise Weekly*: "Operating costs in NZ are already high compared with other destinations in the South Pacific and there is no doubt this imposition of the levy will increase pressure on costs."

Royal Caribbean told *CW* it was among a number of cruise lines working with CLIA Australasia to negotiate issues surrounding the introduction of the tax.

It added it would collect and remit the tax as required and was

"working internally" to decide if the tax would impact cruise fares.

Cruise New Zealand gm Raewyn Tan said the tax is likely to impact the growth rate of NZ cruising.

"While the government did respond to our submission of exempting crew, the fact that we have a tax on tourism and where NZ is already a high cost destination, means there will still be a negative impact on our cruise numbers."

Tan told *CW* she is not certain that the independent economic agency commissioned to analyse the impact of the tax "actually understands cruise".

She added there will be a review of the levy in 30 months time, and its introduction in less than 90 days means "we'll need to get the cruise lines working directly with our government officials."

"The implementation part will be tricky," Tan said.

Spirit slow to Sydney

TECHNICIANS were waiting for the arrival yesterday of *Carnival Spirit* into Sydney Harbour, some seven hours behind schedule due to a mechanical issue at sea.

According to Carnival Cruise Line's Australian Facebook page, guests due to embark yesterday had their boarding times delayed, with the last group scheduled for 4:30pm doing so instead at 11pm.

CW understands the ship departed again prior to midnight after the safety briefing, with the late boarding running smoothly.

Guests embarking the next nine-day South Pacific sailing were compensated for the delay with a \$100 per person onboard credit.

Those leaving the ship were provided free access to phones & internet to change travel plans.

The issue affected the ship's propulsion system, forcing it to reduce cruising speed, however all safety and hotel systems were functioning as normal.

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AmaViola godmother

APT has announced US travel industry leader Jackie Friedman will serve as godmother of the new *AmaViola* which will be formally christened in Vilshofen, Germany in Jun next year.

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Darwin port set for growth

THE Port of Darwin has been privatised, with Chinese group Landbridge paying just over \$500 million for a 99-year lease.

The move is speculated to see a significant expansion of Darwin's cruise facilities, with the multi-faceted Landbridge operating a hotel development arm, which is understood to be keen on building new hospitality operations in the NT capital.

Although cargo is a key part of

Darwin Port's business, there has been an increasing number of passenger cruise ship visits, with 65 arrivals in 2014/15.

Almost half the cargo through the Port of Darwin in the last 12 months has been trade with China, with the China Australia Free Trade Agreement also expected to see this increase too.

Landbridge spokesman Mike Hughes said the company plans to make a "considerable financial investment" in the port.

"We anticipate in excess of \$200 million of capital expenditure over the next 25 years," he said.

During the recent Cruise Down Under conference in Darwin, the local Port Corporation ceo Terry O'Connor highlighted the massive potential of the NT capital for the cruise sector (**CW** 08 Oct), with hundreds of millions of potential passengers within easy cruising distance from Asia to the north.

Coral Expeditions Papua incentive

CORAL Expeditions is offering travel agents an incentive of an additional \$200 cash per client booked on its Spice Islands Expedition in the 2016 season.

The 12-night voyage takes a maximum of 72 passengers aboard the *Coral Discoverer* north to discover the famous Raja Ampat islands, which are home to over 75% of the world's total coral and fish species.

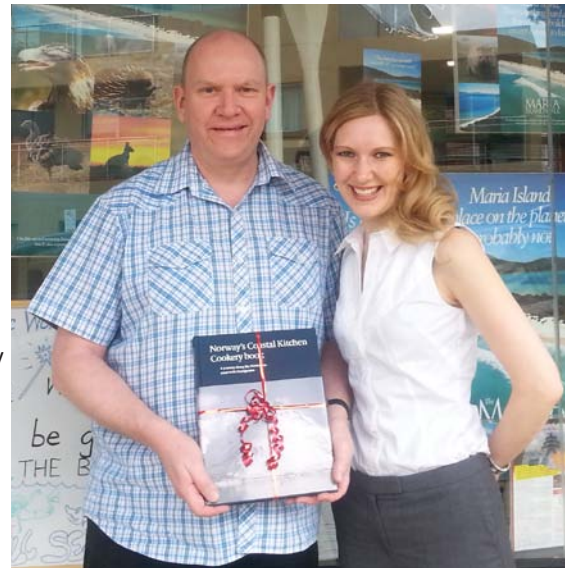
It also takes in Cenerawasih Bay National Park and its whale sharks, Banda's spice markets and visits to villages which are only slowly emerging into the 21st century - call 1800 079 545.

Ian's cooking with Hurtigruten

IAN McMinn from BLUE Full Service Travel Cruises Tours in Freshwater, NSW was the lucky winner of a Hurtigruten Cruises cookbook in the recent **Cruise Weekly** giveaway competition.

As well as receiving the cookbook, a special bonus was having his culinary prize hand-delivered by none other than Discover the World Cruise Sales Manager Stefanie Eberhard.

An excited Ian is **pictured** outside his travel agency office with Stefanie and the cookbook, ready to cook up a storm.



Aurora price protect

AURORA Expeditions is offering the opportunity for travellers to lock in their exchange rate when paying for a trip in US\$.

To qualify for the offer, pax must deposit 50% of the expedition cost upfront at the exchange rate of the day, which will be honoured for further payments unless the AUD rises, resulting in a greater saving to travellers.

The price protect deal is valid for bookings made by 31 Dec.

Hagen to face court

CORRUPTION charges have been levied against Viking Ocean Cruises ceo Torstein Hagen over alleged bribes paid to the Mayor of Bergen, Trude Drevland.

According to reports which have been flatly denied by Viking, the allegations stem from the May christening of *Viking Star* in Bergen (**Travel Daily** 18 May).

Hagen is accused of plying Mayor Drevland with a free trip to Venice and a free cruise on *Viking Star* in return for modified Norwegian shipping regulations.

Norway's VG News says Hagen sought "very most favourable treatment" relating to shipping laws on sailing between domestic ports, something prohibited in the Norwegian Int'l Ship Registry.

Drevland is accused of trying to influence government agencies to ensure the ship sailed under the Norwegian flag.

Viking Cruises said it followed "perfectly normal business practices" and it was confident it has done nothing unlawful.

Makeover for Liberty

A TRIO of new water slides will be fitted to Royal Caribbean Int'l's *Liberty of the Seas* as part of a host of upgrades during a month-long drydock to take place in Feb.

The 3,634-pax ship will undergo a "bow-to-stern makeover" prior to resuming service to Mexico and the Caribbean based from the Texas port of Galveston.

In addition to the new water slides, a "Kids Only" water park dubbed Splashaway Bay featuring geysers will be fitted.

Dining options will be updated with 'Sabor', a new Mexican restaurant as well as the popular Giovanni's Table and R Bar.

New accommodation categories including 26 Panoramic Ocean View Staterooms will be fitted among 53 new cabins onboard.



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CDU Update



Jill Abel - CEO



Two new members

WE ARE continuing to bolster our ranks with the addition of two new members.

The latest members to join are the Shire of Exmouth, a growing port of call for international and domestic cruise lines, and Tasmanian tourism consultancy Karen Fraser's Tourism Professionals – both indicative of the very varied and broad scope of CDU members.

Exmouth, in Western Australia, will welcome the new *Pacific Eden* four times in 2016, but the bigger news for the port is set to be new cruise ship docking facilities with discussions being held between the Shire of Exmouth and cruise lines.

For cruise line passengers, Exmouth offers a wide range of day-trip tour options to explore its Ningaloo Coast, which includes the Cape Range National Park.

The Exmouth Visitor Centre has met requests by cruise lines to hold markets at the passenger tender point by leading a cruise ship welcome team to expand these markets.

Based in Hobart, Karen Fraser brings more than 30 years industry experience with Tourism Professionals providing a variety of services including destination representation and marketing.

Both new members will be welcome additions to CDU and we look forward to having them onboard.

Ponant lights up Russian Far East



DESPITE threats of a typhoon in the area which forced a slight amendment to the itinerary, it proved no setback for this group of agents on a Ponant famil trip.

Travelling onboard *Le Soleal*, the group from Australia was hosted by the line's director of sales for Australasia, Steve McLaughlin.

The Russian Far East Expedition from Petropavlovsk, Russia to Kanazawa, Japan showcased some of the world's most remote & spectacular natural landforms.

As a result of the typhoon warning, the ship ventured to its destination via the Kouril Islands and the Kamchatka Peninsula.

The group of agents, **pictured** above by Aussie photographer Nick Raines, included Simon Wallis, Travelrite; Del Smolkovich, Cruise Traveller; Sharon Godden, Cruise View; Neil Saunders, Wild

Earth Travel; Richard Muff, Travel Masters; Louise Dann, Cruise Travel Centre; Brett Dann, Hunter Travel Group; Sandy Grant, Cruise Brokers; Sara Grant, Cruise Brokers and Steve McLaughlin from Ponant.

Getaway to Bordeaux

CHANNEL Nine travel program *Getaway* will this week feature the first of a three-part series starring Jamie Durie onboard a Scenic river cruise in the Bordeaux region of France.

The segment will cover three half-hour episodes, beginning from 5:30pm this Sat 17 Oct.

Highlights of the series will include Durie exploring the town of Cadillac along with Scenic's exclusive Sundowners event.

Several wineries, gourmet food markets and Scenic Enrich events will also feature in the programs.

MEANWHILE, Scenic has extended its solo traveller offer of no single supplement on 2016 Bordeaux river cruise departures.

The 11-day 'Beautiful Bordeaux' river cruise itinerary is priced from \$6,695pp twin share.

Early Silversea bonus

GUESTS keen on a 2016 voyage on Silversea Cruises can enjoy a 10% earlybird discount on select departures if fully paid by 10 Dec.

The deal applies to departures between 01 Oct and 31 Dec 2016.



APPARENTLY, the burgers at Guy's Burger Joint on Carnival Cruise Lines are so good, they have the ability to incite a full-scale brawl if they run out.

That's exactly what happened recently on the *Carnival Breeze*, when the waiting time took its toll on a group of women eager to sink their teeth into some of Guy's famous grilled fare.

According to a report on the *Inquisitr*, the waiting time for the cheeseburgers caused four girls to lose their temper and start kicking and punching each other.

A video of the melee has since surfaced on *LiveLeak*, including an ironic positioning of someone with a T-Shirt which says "Keep Calm and Cruise On".

At one point, a man walks up to the fracas and calmly lifts one of the women involved over his shoulder before walking away.

The *Inquisitr* report quipped the incident gives new meaning to the term "cruisin for a bruisin".

M/Y Callisto purchase

SMALL-SHIP niche operator Variety Cruises has acquired the 17-cabin *M/Y Callisto*, which will join the line's fleet to operate popular Classical Greece sailings in the 2016 northern summer.

The ship is currently in drydock undergoing a significant upgrade and refurbishment before being deployed alongside fellow Variety vessel *M/Y Harmony V*.

Works currently underway include re-decking on all levels, new stabilisers and generators.

For the 2016 northern spring, the ship will replace the *M/Y Variety Voyager* in Costa Rica.

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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Part of the Travel Daily group of publications.

