

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Tuesday 30 May 2017

## Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

## RCI 2018/19 bookings

THE long-awaited Royal Caribbean International 2018/19 Australian summer cruise season opened for sale today, two weeks later than originally planned.

The release is accompanied by a month of deals, with a buy-one-get-one-half-price offer, plus a balcony stateroom for the price of an oceanview available on bookings made by 30 Jun.

The sale date was pushed back due to the line needing more time to "finalise deployment details" (CW 25 May).

RCI's 2018/19 summer season deployment remains unchanged to earlier announcements and will see *Ovation of the Seas*, *Explorer of the Seas* and *Radiance of the Seas* return to local waters.

## Top cruise lines revealed

AUSTRALIA'S travel agents have rated the best performing cruise lines and highlighted key threats to their business in *Cruise Weekly's* exclusive Cruise Industry Survey for 2017.

The results confirm agents are reaping the benefits of a booming cruise sector, but feel increasingly threatened by offshore retailers stealing business online.

Compiled by Stollznow Research for *Cruise Weekly*, the findings have been gathered from 350 travel agent responses.

They show cruise sales have increased for 83% of travel agents in the past 12 months, with over half of agents saying growth has come at the expense of domestic tourism and coach touring.

Royal Caribbean International took the lead as the most commonly sold operator, booked by 82.2% of respondents.

The line narrowly overtook last

year's leader Princess Cruises at 81.9%, and was ahead of other majors including P&O Cruises (75%), Carnival Cruise Lines (65%), Celebrity Cruises (60%), Holland America Line (59%) and Norwegian Cruise Line (42%).

Most agents said they feared losing sales to overseas retailers, with 30% saying the risk was 'extreme', up from 24% last year.

Almost half (49%) said they had lost sales to overseas retailers, with a further 13% reporting they had lost "a lot" of sales offshore.

A majority were also concerned about direct sales, with 53% saying they had lost some sales to direct channels and 17% saying they lost "a lot".

Agents named on board credit and fly free deals as the best incentives for clinching sales.

More details will follow in *CW*. To enquire about the full report, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Agents' best rankings

TRAVEL agents named Azamara Club Cruises the best line for overall sales rep service in *CW's* 2017 Cruise Industry Survey.

Azamara's sales team achieved a score of 84, putting it ahead of Princess Cruises (80), Celebrity Cruises (78) and Royal Caribbean International (76).

Princess Cruises was the line clients most often asked for by name, respondents said, and was considered best for agent training and development.

P&O Cruises was named best for its call centre.

When it came to generosity, Regent Seven Seas Cruises was considered to offer the best commissions, ranking ahead of Silversea Cruises, Royal Caribbean International and Crystal Cruises.

Respondents came from all states, with 40% from Helloworld Travel and its subsidiaries (inc MTA) and 20% from the Flight Centre Travel Group.

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## Syd policy questioned

**CRUISE** lines have given mixed reviews to the new booking policy the Port Authority of NSW is considering for Sydney's cruise berths (**CW** Thu).

Adam Armstrong, md RCL Cruises Australia & NZ called for a policy that gives preference for slots at the OPT be given to the ships that are too large to sail under the bridge and which bring the most passengers to Sydney.

Armstrong highlighted that the IPART report released in Nov, which he said "did not recommend a bidding process for slots at the OPT in its final report because it said the industry was not supportive of such a system". "Though there may be a place for bidding for slots vacated by incumbent bookings," he added.

On the other end of the scale, Norwegian Cruise Line Holding's svp and md Asia Pacific, Steve Odell told **CW** that as a recent entrant to the Sydney homeport market, "we are currently at a

disadvantage when it comes to allocation of berths".

"Berthing slots are often held without company deployments being agreed or announced and then slots are subsequently cancelled and opened up," explained Odell.

"This is why an open booking period for the OPT with the correct booking procedures and cancellation penalties is important to us, similar to how other ports worldwide are managed".

He noted it was difficult to comment on the proposal until all the details were made public, but emphasised the need to resolve the lack of berthing space in Sydney Harbour east of the bridge.

Carnival Australia & Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia chose not to comment until details are revealed.

### Ulstein new contract

**ULSTEIN** Design & Solutions has won the contract for the design & equipment package for the first of Sunstone's new expedition vessels, which will be chartered to Aurora Expeditions (**CW** 16 May).

Ulstein's contract includes options for nine more ships.

### P&O agent MAY-hem

**MORE** than 250 agents attended P&O Cruises' special trade roadshows held this month to promote its new program and the launch of its new ship, *Pacific Explorer* in Jun.

The annual MAY-hem events were held in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, with South Sydney Rabbitohs' George Burgess, Jason Clark, Angus Crichton and Adam Reynolds joining the fun in Sydney.

Travel agent partners Jonathon House from Flight Centre World Square in Sydney, Jane Hoskin from Flight Centre Queen Street Mall in Brisbane and Kathy Thomaidis from MTA Travel in Melbourne won a cruise in the prize draw at each event.

## Explorer transformation begins



**THE** newest ship for P&O Cruises has entered into a 12-day drydock in Singapore which will transform the former *Dawn Princess* into *Pacific Explorer*.

The vessel will be fitted with two waterslides more than 80m long, a waterpark, a barefoot lawn bowling green, the P&O Edge Adventure Park, the Big Screen and the new dining offerings Luke's and 400 Gradi.

Other dining options will include Waterfront Restaurant, Angelo's, Dragon Lady, The Pantry and small bar The Bonded Store, while public spaces will also be fitted with P&O-style decor.

P&O Cruises president Sture Myrmell said "*Pacific Explorer* is the next stage in the evolution of P&O, building on our very

popular modern Australian holiday offering with some exciting new features".

The vessel will depart Singapore on 09 Jun and sail from Sydney on her first cruise on 22 Jun.

### Constellation delayed

**CELEBRITY** Cruises' *Celebrity Constellation* was delayed in Barcelona for two days, reportedly due to propulsion issues, departing yesterday on a revised itinerary.

In a statement, Celebrity Cruises said it was doing its best to "make things right for guests on *Celebrity Constellation* whose vacations have been disrupted.

"We are compensating guests for missed ports, as well as extra hotel and meal expenses, and offering on board spending credits as a goodwill gesture."

## Carnival Alipay in Asia

**CARNIVAL** Corporation has entered into an agreement with Chinese mobile payment provider, Alipay, to offer payment services on board its cruise ship fleet in Asia.

Under the pact, Costa Cruises will give passengers the choice to use Alipay accounts for cabin folios, which will be cleared on a nightly basis using the accounts.

"Alipay is a leading payment service already used by hundreds of millions of Chinese consumers, so we see this as a natural fit for us in China and a great opportunity to make on board purchases even more convenient," said Michael Thamm, group ceo, Costa Group and Carnival Asia.

The service will debut on *Costa Serena* this year before potentially expanding to additional ships in the fleet and Carnival Corp's other brands which sail in China and Asia.

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AGENT  
UPDATE

Tuesday 30 May 2017

## Expedition Alaska

**EXPEDITION** Cruise Specialists has added Pacific Catalyst's *MV Catalyst* to its portfolio.

The 12-passenger vessel offers weekly Alaskan Passages voyages between Juneau and Petersburg, including exploration of Ford's Terror, Dawes and Baird glaciers and the chance to go ashore at Pack Creek Zoological Reserve to spot brown bears.

Seven-day cruises on board *MV Catalyst* depart between Jun-Sep and prices start at US\$4,250pp.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

## Ports America invest

**PORTS** America will sink US\$38.5m into improvements across Manhattan and Brooklyn Cruise Terminals after New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) selected the company to operate both facilities through to 2029.

The upgrades will include new capacity for larger vessels, among other improvements.

## Celebrity wine tasting

**CELEBRITY** Cruises is introducing an in-room wine tasting experience, which has been developed in partnership with *The Wine Show* and will be introduced on *Celebrity Eclipse*.

Guests will be able to follow presenters Joe Fattorini and Amelia Singer in a specially produced film accessed via the in-room channel.

The experience includes a tasting case and a collection of four wines for sampling, along with a tasting mat and notes and is priced at US\$59 for two people.

Under the partnership, the show's two hosts will be on board select sailings in Sep and Oct.

## HAL Cuba prices

**HOLLAND** America Line has clarified prices for its Cuba cruises aboard *ms Veendam* lead in at \$1,199ppts including taxes, fees and port expenses.

For more on HAL's Cuba sailings, **CLICK HERE**.

## Royal's Funday Sunday



**BEFORE** wrapping up the summer season, Royal Caribbean International hosted 50 team members from helloworld HQ, The Cruise Team and Qantas Holidays on board *Voyager of the Seas* for the brand's first ever travel partner Sunday Funday.

The action-filled afternoon saw participants zip around the FlowRider and try their hand at mini golf, topped off with lunch at Johnny Rockets.

**Pictured** playing a round of mini-golf with the Sydney Harbour Bridge as a backdrop are: Marini Syarif, Anthea Sonego, Alexis Dionisio & Madeline Buhr.

Manita Singh honing her skills on the Flowrider is inset.



## Viking's earlybirds

**VIKING** Cruises is reminding agents only four weeks are left to take advantage of its river and ocean earlybird deals.

Offers include a \$1,000 discount per couple on any ocean cruises and savings of \$2,000 per couple on any 2018 river cruise.

Book by 30 Jun.

2018-19  
INAUGURAL  
SEASON NOW  
OPEN!



## INTRODUCING ms NIEUW STATENDAM

Holland America Line's newest Pinnacle-class ship, *Nieuw Statendam* is preparing to make her debut! A sister ship to *ms Koningsdam*, this spectacular new vessel combines classic style with contemporary appointments, engaging new experiences and carefully crafted itineraries.

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Compare the range of onboard thrills available in the June issue of *travelBulletin*.

**CLICK HERE to read**  
**travelBulletin**

## RCI meteorologist

**ROYAL** Caribbean International has appointed what it said is the cruise industry's first official chief meteorologist, James Van Fleet.

Van Fleet's newly created role includes assessing the weather for RCI's fleet and using his background in broadcasting to translate his findings to guests.

"[I bring] yet another added layer of safety at corporate [level] for anyone in the world, at any time," Van Fleet said.

## Bentours feedback

**BENTOURS** has received positive feedback for travellers for its Follow The Lights tour.

More than 90% of guests were satisfied with Bentours' tour managers in Scandinavia.

Around 92% of travellers loved the Husky dog safari and 4 out of 5 people would recommend the trip to their friends and family.

The itinerary runs over 15-days and includes a trip to Tallinn.



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

SYDNEY	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	02 Jun
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	04 Jun
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	05 Jun
<i>Sun Princess</i>	05 Jun

BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	30 May
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	03 Jun
<i>Sun Princess</i>	03 Jun

DARWIN	
<i>Coral Expeditions 1</i>	01 Jun

## Construction a go for Ponant



**STEEL** has been cut for Ponant's third and fourth expedition yachts which are due to be delivered in 2019 and are part of its four Ponant Explorers.

To mark the occasion a ceremony was held this month for *Le Bougainville* and *Le Dumont-d'Urville* which will be built as 1C class ice ships.

Inside the four ships, which measure 131m in length, there will be 92 guest cabins.

The first two ships in the Ponant Explorers series will be operational in 2018.

**Pictured** is Hugues Decamus, Ponant chief engineer, newbuilding and other VIPs at the steel cutting ceremony.

## Celestyal's new site

**CELESTYAL** Cruises has unveiled a new website which is now compatible with all browsers and mobile devices.

The cruise line said the portal "offers visitors a faster, simpler booking process and a comprehensive introduction to the company's cruises, services and unique selling points".

## Aqua training session

**AQUA** Expeditions will hold an online webinar training program in its agent portal.

The session will be held on 05 Jun and will last for 30 minutes, with a Q&A session at the end.

Reena Mishra, reservations supervisor will lead the session.

To register for the webinar, **CLICK HERE**.

## 50 Degrees voyage

**LONELY** Planet photographer David Evans will be on board a 12-day Escorted Midnight Sun Photography Tour in Norway with 50 Degrees North.

The Hurtigruten voyage will be accompanied by a 50 Degrees North Scandinavian escort and departs 26 May 2018.

It is priced at \$12,960ppts, for details, **CLICK HERE**.

## TT Line replacements

**THE** Tasmanian Government dedicated an additional \$100 million into the TT-Line Ship Replacement Fund in last week's Budget release.

## OOE travel credit

**ONE** Ocean Expeditions is offering US\$1,000 travel credit for guests on soft adventure cruises in the Norwegian High Arctic.

The deal is available on all new bookings confirmed by tomorrow, 31 May, on Spitsbergen voyages departing in 2018.



**THE** burger war is heating up!

Just days after Holland America Line claimed "Every day is National Burger Day" on its ships, Carnival Cruise Line launched into action and made the largest hamburger at sea.

All in the name of the United States' National Burger Day on 28 May, the burger-off began when Orlando Ashford, HAL president, touted the line's burgers as "the best at sea".

HAL serves more than 4,000 burgers during a week-long cruise and Carnival was quick to point out it serves around 1,000 burgers per day on each ship, adding up to more than five million burgers a year.

Carnival's gargantuan celebration was modelled after the offerings at Guy's Burger Joint, which features on 14 of the line's ships.

The burger (**pictured**) packed 91kg of meat and 23kg of cheese and toppings and the bun used 23kg of flour.



*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](http://www.cruiseweekly.com.au).

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