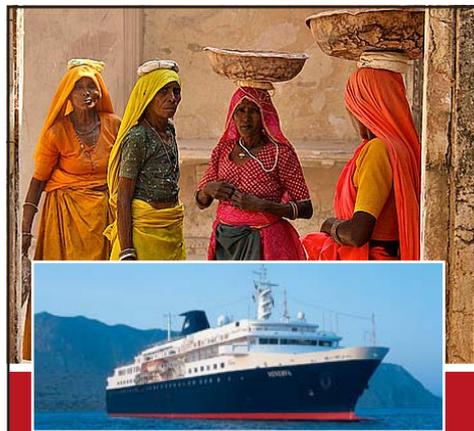




Voyager of the Seas for Sydney

Australia and New Zealand will welcome their largest-ever home-ported megaliner next year.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL LAST NIGHT announced that the 3,840-pax *Voyager of the Seas* will be based in Sydney from Nov 2012.



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TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

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The first megaliner ever to be based in local waters, *Voyager* is scheduled to start the five-month season after sailing in China between Jun and Oct, RCI senior executives told a press conference in Shanghai.

The 311m long, 48m wide ship, with 15 passenger decks, will offer clients onboard features never before seen in this region, including an ice rink, rock-climbing wall and inside cabins overlooking the Royal Promenade.

The ship's other highlights include 11 dining venues, 13 bars and clubs, three swimming pools, six hot tubs, an art gallery, wedding chapel, kids water park, sports court, nine-hole minigolf course, golf simulator, inline skating track and a 1400-square metre gym and spa.

"There are clear opportunities in the China and Australia markets, which are key areas for Royal Caribbean International's global development," said Adam Goldstein, ceo, RCI.

"We are excited to be able to bring such an innovative ship to the region in 2012."

According to Gavin Smith, md, RCC Australia, the deployment is a testament to the company's "tremendous belief" in the Australian cruising market in particular.

"*Voyager of the Seas* will be the largest cruise ship ever to call Australia home and once she joins our local fleet we will offer more than 60 cruise departures per year, carrying over 150,000 guests," he said.

Voyager will be the fifth RCCL ship sailing in the region in 2012-13.

The local season will feature 12 NZ, South Pacific and Australian itineraries ranging from one to 18 nights, sailing from Sydney and Fremantle.

The Asia program will include four- to 10-night cruises from Shanghai.

Bookings are due to open for sale in early Jul.

MSC enjoys lighter dining

GUESTS ONBOARD MSC CRUISES' FLEET ARE NOW ABLE to dine at their leisure, following the cruise line's decision to add to its standard dining offering, with lighter casual dining options.

As such passengers can enjoy evening service whenever they wish, when dining in the fleet's selection of buffet-style restaurants.

"The innovation will complement the elegant dining experience of waiter service and specialty restaurants – the ideal spontaneous dining solution before or after a day spa treatment or visit to the ship's theatre," said Lynne Clarke, MD of MSC Cruises Australia and NZ.

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TODAY'S CRUISE WEEKLY

Welcome to today's bumper CW Trade edition featuring six pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

2012 BROCHURE NOW AVAILABLE

With an expanded range of itineraries for 2012 - Orion Expedition Cruises can now take you to remote destinations throughout Australia and Asia. To discover a path less travelled - order your brochure by visiting www.orionexpeditions.com/travelagents/brochure

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Cruise ships delivering passengers

Regular readers of this publication would be well aware of the fact that cruising has the ability to cater for a wide audience and is able to boast some of the highest satisfaction ratings among all types of travel.

For those that are active and need to be entertained, a cruise holiday offers a myriad of things to do from day break, to well into the night.

For those that like nothing better than to sit on a deck chair with a good book, it's hard to beat a beautiful day with nothing more than the open ocean as your view.

Cruising offers the opportunity for people to meet and mix with like-minded others, or if that's not your style, it's easy to find a nice comfortable lounge to enjoy quiet time for yourself.

With cruise itineraries covering multiple destinations, there will always be somewhere new to discover, places that people wouldn't normally visit as part of their holiday, and even many places that can't be reached by road.

One very important point right here, is that whilst cruise passengers may only be spending a single day in different ports, they are potentially discovering places that they can return to, for a longer stay at a later date.

Many holiday makers are constantly looking for opportunities that enable them to discover new destinations and in many cases this can be achieved on a cruise within just one itinerary!



Brett Jardine

Brett Jardine
General Manager
ICCA

Creative Cruising gets adventurous

Creative Cruising will now focus on adventure cruising as it is absorbed into the Adventure World brand.

A REVAMP OF THE WHOLESALE OPERATIONS OF NRMA Tourism & Leisure is set to see Creative Cruising change its course towards niche and adventure cruising.

From 01 Jul, the company's marketing will be aligned with Adventure World, along with NRMA's other travel brands Value Tours and Coral Seas.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly*, CEO Keith Stanley said the move was a simple financial decision.

"Having four brands is four times more expensive than one," he said.

"Adventure World has a good reputation with agencies so it helps us to have clarity, for agents to be able to differentiate the products we sell."

But other sectors of cruising would not be dumped, Stanley said.

"We will continue to market the big ships but from a wholesaling point of view, we will focus on niche and specialty small ships offering adventure and experiential cruises."

Adventure World has already made its mark in the cruising market, this year launching its first dedicated cruise brochure (*CW*, 27 Jan).

Last year it took on the GSA role for American Safari Cruises, Innersea Discoveries and Lindblad Expeditions and its adventure cruise sales increased by over 32%.

"Adventure World also had some success in marketing *Cruise Spirit* a few years ago," Stanley said.

The company has budgeted for the shift in direction, he added, "but we're hoping the overall amount [of sales] doesn't change".

The transition is expected to take 12 months to two years, he said.

"The cruise industry is maturing and we

see this as an opportunity to focus on the people who, once they get the cruise bug, want to explore more of the world by cruising."

Creative Cruising's GSA representations remain unchanged, Stanley confirmed.

Meanwhile, former employee Katrina Bourne returns this week as product manager, with additional sales staff also to be recruited.



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New Zealand joins ICCA

TOURISM NEW ZEALAND HAS BECOME THE LATEST associate member of the International Cruise Council Australasia – a clear sign of the body's recognition of the value of cruising, says gm Brett Jardine.

"It's very exciting to have the membership of such a strong tourism body in the region because it indicates that they recognise the cruise industry is making a significant contribution to their economy," he told CW.

"Tourism New Zealand's membership is a token contribution back to the industry, to support it and to recognise our support."

Jardine said TNZ would have greater access to ICCA's cruise specialist agents and would also be involved in improving agent education.

"It's very positive for us – we'll gain from their expertise and it will give us the ability to expand on our New Zealand content in training."

Jardine said he looked forward to other tourism bodies, such as Tourism Australia, "following suit".

Justin Watson, gm, marketing communications, TNZ, predicted a further 20% rise in the number of international cruise passengers visiting the country in 2011-12.

According to the latest ICCA figures, NZ attracted 10% of Australian cruise passengers in 2010, up 32% on the previous year.

MS AmaVerde charms crowds in Venice



AmaVerde was officially christened by her Godmother Judy Vanrenen, a partner with APT's Geoff McGeary in APT Botanica World Discoveries.

Leading up to her christening *AmaVerde* hosted a series of pre-launch cruises, and is now busy opening up Europe to guests with APT's 15-day Budapest and Amsterdam itinerary which stops at around 18 villages, towns and cities along the Danube, Main and Rhine rivers.

CROWDS WERE SUITABLY WOODED WHEN APT debuted its second Concerto Class rivership MS *AmaVerde* on Venetian waters this month.

Offering accommodation for 161 passengers the new vessel features revolutionary twin balcony suites (as seen on *Ms AmaBella* launched last year); the largest set of suites on European waterways; an onboard swimming pool; a fireside library and an intimate chef's table restaurant.



Judy Vanrenen with Captain George Stefan

Sea World's Whale season

WHALE SEASON HAS KICKED-OFF AT SEA WORLD ON the Gold Coast, with the theme park offering daily 2.5hr whale watching cruises (twice on weekends) priced at \$99 per adult and \$77 per child, visit MyFun.com.au for details.

Intercruises expansion

INTERCRUISES HAS EXPANDED IS PORT SERVICES AND handling operations in the North American market, via investment in TMS Gateway, and can now provide services at all major ports in North America, incl those on the west coast.

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Orion's Borneo builds momentum in Aussie market

SALES FOR ORION EXPEDITION CRUISES' 2011 inaugural Borneo season have so far exceeded the company's sales projections, despite getting off to a slow start.

Speaking to **CW** yesterday, Chris Perkins, GM of Sales & Marketing at Orion Expedition Cruises, confirmed that following the addition of several educational tools for agents and consumers, Australian sales for Borneo increased four-fold, leaving now only limited availability on voyages between Aug and Sep this year.

The slow sales start, according to Perkins, was due to a lack of understanding of Borneo, with many customers unable to distinguish between the four voyages.

To resolve this problem, Orion created a map which provides detailed information of routes and highlights.

"Borneo is a new and exciting destination for Orion, but we have had to work hard to understand the destination and what it can offer our guests," Perkins said.

Australian booking interest was also

boosted with the release of the inspirational Born to Be Wild IMAX documentary which centered around the work of Borneo orangutan sanctuary Camp Leakey, to which *Orion II* will be taking guests in Dec.

Australians are taking the lion's share of bookings, however Perkins said that the company has noticed a sharp rise in interest from guests in the US market.

Sales for Orion's return to Borneo in 2012, (released to the market in Apr) are also very strong, according to Perkins, with bookings coming from a diverse mix of guests drawn by the "experience" Borneo has to offer.

Agents who would like a copy of the new Borneo map tool, or details of upcoming film nights and briefings should email Orion at info@orionexpeditions.com.

Epic's new itinerary

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE HAS ADDED A SECOND seven-day itinerary to *Norwegian Epic's* Western Mediterranean season next year.

The new itinerary departs out of Civitavecchia (Rome) and calls into Livorno, Villefranche, Marseille, and Barcelona.

The itinerary will alternate with *Epic's* original Barcelona roundtrip itinerary between 29 Apr-17 Oct 2012.

Brochure of the week

Louis Cruises and Creative Cruising have unveiled a new brochure for Australians planning on travelling to the Mediterranean.

Louis Cruises, known for its mid-sized ships, has been in the business for 25 years, and its newest brochure features a full parcel of its best itineraries from France and Italy to destinations including Mallorca, Barcelona, Almeria, Malaga, Athens and the Greek Islands, as well as the Middle East, Istanbul and Cairo.

For further details visit - www.creativecruising.com.au.



CCL joins Facebook

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES AUSTRALIA HAS LAUNCHED A new Facebook page, uniquely tailored to the Aussie market - www.facebook.com/CarnivalOz.

RCCL opens in France

ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISES HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL open a corporate office in Paris to cope with local demand, headed up by managing director Frederic Martinez.

UNPRECEDENTED SAVINGS

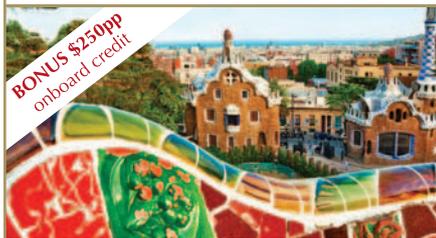
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Princess' sales record

RECENTLY PRINCESS CRUISES CELEBRATED ITS biggest ever bookings day for Australian operations, clocking-up 60% higher numbers than the last record-holding day in Jan 2009.

The mega-bookings coup occurred on the first day of the cruise line's three-day New Zealand cruise sale (Wed 25 May), with the numbers for the week between 25 May and 01 Jun also up an impressive 20% on the previous strongest week (also recorded in Jan 2009).

The deals were offered on voyages over the 2011-12 and 2012-13 summer seasons, departing out of Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney onboard *Sun Princess*, *Dawn Princess* and *Sea Princess*.

"This latest sales result clearly shows that Princess Cruises' New Zealand voyages, with their special New Zealand onboard offerings, have hit the mark with Australians," said Stanley Birge, Princess Cruises Commercial Director for Carnival Australia.

Legend returns to Japan

ROYAL CARIBBEAN HAS CONFIRMED THAT *LEGEND of the Seas* will return to Japanese ports-of-call starting with Okinawa from 01 Aug, following her Hong Kong summer season.

"Judging from the current situation in Japan, we are well-assured of the safety of travelling to Japan," said Kelvin Tan, regional director, Asia Pacific of Royal Caribbean Cruises.

"Japan has always been an attractive tourist destination and its show of great resilience in the face of the recent crisis has given travellers the confidence to visit the country again," he added.

Between Aug and Oct *Legend* will host 11 sailings, including charters, to Japanese ports-of-call including Okinawa, Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Beppu, Nagasaki and Hokkaido, out from Hong Kong, Tianjin and Shanghai.

According to the cruise line, *Legend's* upcoming Japanese ports of call will be "mostly based on the ship's itineraries originally planned this year", which do not include tsunami or nuclear affected areas.

MSC Christmas specials

MSC CRUISES IS SPREADING CHRISTMAS CHEER EARLY this year, with the release of some sizzling festive season specials.

Deals start from \$989pp/ts for a seven-night Christmas cruise onboard *MSC Splendida*, including all onboard meals and entertainment, port charges for adults, a captain's cocktail party and gala dinner.

"When you consider children under 18 years cruise free when sharing a cabin with two adults (need only pay port charges), the Christmas cruises are a real bargain and very different from the traditional celebrations at home," said Lynne Clarke, MD of MSC Cruises Australia and NZ.

Other deals include a seven-night *Splendida* New Year's cruise from Genoa, stopping in Barcelona, Casablanca, Gibraltar and Marseille, priced from \$1,099pp/ts.

See www.msccruises.com.au.

New Aurea Suites

MSC CRUISES IS GETTING READY TO DEBUT A NEW suite category onboard *MSC Splendida* and *MSC Fantasia* later this year, titled the Aurea Suites.

Each of the new suites will measure between 20.73sq mtrs and 46.25sq mtrs, and will be located at the forefront of the ships offering fantastic views and close access to the vessels respective Aurea Spas.

As an added bonus guests will enjoy a range of spa services as part of their cruise fare including a welcome spa cocktail, unlimited access to the Thermal suite, a private consultation with a spa doctor, a 30-minute Balinese massage, a 30-minute facial treatment and a solarium tanning session.

Aurea Suite packages will also be available on the new *MSC Divina* cruising the Mediterranean in Jun 2012.

Prices for Aurea Suite packages start at \$2,399pp/ts for departures onboard *MSC Fantasia* from 27 Nov.

Discovery refurbishments

THIS MONTH VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY IS SET TO embark on a refurbishment of *MV Discovery*, which will include a refresh of the ship's interior and exterior.

As part of the make-over, Voyages will trial a new internet system, which aims to significantly improve Wi-Fi speed, whilst media players have superseded her older DVDs playing content into cabins and the ship's cinema.

Teak decking surrounding *Discovery's* Sun Deck is also being replaced, and new carpets laid in common areas and staircases.

The refurbishments are set to continue over the coming months, and will be complemented with further enhancements to *Discovery* whilst she is in drydock later in the year.

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Gateway to the Black Sea

GATEWAY TRAVEL HAS ADDED A RANGE OF SEVEN- and eight-night Black Sea cruises onboard the mega-yacht *Pegasus* to its product line-up.

Sailing between Jul and Sep, the voyages are priced from \$3,520 for a Black Sea Treasures cruise from Istanbul to Odessa, taking in the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

For details see www.gatewaytravel.com.au.

Pacific Blue Cruises

PACIFIC BLUE CRUISES, OPERATOR OF THE BOUTIQUE cruise ship *MV Lycianda*, has appointed Travel Representation Services (TRS) as its Australian marketing representative.

MV Lycianda takes guests around the remote islands of Vanuatu, and features air-conditioned ensuite cabins, a large dining room and bar and outdoor decking areas.

For details call TRS on 02 4448 8885.

Agents experience a beautiful European Tapestry



EUROPE'S DIVERSE CULTURAL landscape was revealed to Australian agents late last month, as they sailed along the Danube from Vienna to Budapest onboard *Avalon Tapestry*, calling into quaint villages, vibrant towns and historic monuments along the way.

Highlights of the voyage included an excursion to Salzburg, at the foot of the

Austrian alps, as well as a trip to the stunningly beautiful UNESCO World Heritage town of Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic.

Agents also enjoyed a Royal Waltz concert in Vienna as well as a visit to the famous hill-top Abbey of Melk overlooking the mighty Danube.

The famil was hosted by Avalon Waterways, in conjunction with Emirates and included three nights in Dubai and four nights aboard *Avalon Tapestry*.

The group is pictured above enjoying the view from the ship's Sky Deck whilst sailing in Regensberg, Germany, (from left): Michelle Henderson, Harvey World Travel Modbury; Amy Cetta, Flight Centre Hollywood Plaza; Marisa Russo, Flight Centre Hallet Cove; Victoria Chapman, Regional Sales Manager, Avalon Waterways; Sera Hutson, Flight Centre Glenelg; Captain Dingeman van Ijzerlooij; Bronwyn Roach, Phil Hoffmann Travel Victor Harbor; Maree Matanle, RACT Launceston; Ryan Faggotter, Flight Centre Torrensville; Kylie Atkins, Flight Centre Unley; Jed Sale, Flight Centre Seaford; Steve Peters, Emirates sales executive SA/TAS/NT and Debbie Mondon, HWT Launceston.



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF (WELL SORT OF).

The *Titanic II* has sunk on her maiden voyage, prompting speculation that the name Titanic should never be used for a ship again.

Unlike her namesake, the *Titanic II* did not take a single soul with her when she made her way to the bottom of the sea, in fact only a single person, Mark Wilkinson, was onboard the 4.8 metre cabin cruiser when she met her ultimate demise.

According to reports, Wilkinson purchased the boat from the side of the road, naming her *Titanic II* before taking her for an inaugural spin on the West Bay Harbour in Dorset, Southern England.

It was not long into his adventure before he began to notice the boat beginning to take on water, and according to Wilkinson "If it wasn't for the harbourmaster, I would have gone down with the *Titanic*".

"It's all a bit embarrassing and I got pretty fed up with people asking me if I had hit an iceberg," he said.

"It wasn't a very big boat - I think an ice cube could have sunk it!" a eyewitness told local media.

NAKED AMBITION.

Intrepid Irish adventurer, Keith Whelan, has had to cut short his world-record bid to row across the Indian Ocean- naked, after foul weather caused him... complications.

Known to many as the Naked Adventurer, Whelan struck trouble off the coast of Geraldton (WA) when rough seas and large waves beat at his boat and body, resulting in a gash to his head, and a drop in his jovial spirits.

Following a distress call a kindly merchant ship, the *Fuji-Fuka*, changed course to help the naked man in the middle of the ocean.

Wilkinson is now onboard the *Fuji-Fuka*, having his injuries assessed.

Onboard Wilkinson 'tweeted' his followers saying "feeling a bit down but I am ok physically".

Wilkinson is pictured above not-so-naked.



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Editorial:
Louise Goldsbury & Amanda Collins
info@cruiseweekly.com.au

Advertising & Promotions:
Advertising & Marketing Manager
Lisa Maroun
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

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