



Antarctica in massive decline

The cruise-only category is expected to drop to less than 5,000 passengers next season.

THE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO ANTARCTICA decreased by 8.3 per cent in the past year, and next season will see a much larger slide, according to the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO).

IAATO yesterday released its latest visitor numbers, revealing that 33,824 passengers travelled to the region with its member-operators in 2010-11, compared to 36,875 in 2009-10.

The total for 2011-12 is forecast to be less than 26,000 – a 25 per cent decline on the season just ended.

The anticipated drop is due to several large ships pulling out of the region due to a new ban on carrying heavy fuel oil, which comes into effect in Aug.

Last season, 14,373 passengers sailed on large ships' cruise-only trips (500-plus passenger ships with no landings).

IAATO projects that this cruise-only category will drop to less than 5,000 passengers next season.

Antarctic tourism numbers have been falling since 2007-08 when IAATO members carried 46,265 visitors to Antarctica.

IAATO chief Steve Wellmeier attributed the past decreases on the effects of the global economic slowdown.

"While we expect this to continue playing a role, there is little question that the more significant factor in next year's lower numbers is the consequence of the HFO ban," he said.

"The result will be visitor numbers overall that mirror those of a decade ago."

New Azamara website

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES HAS RELAUNCHED ITS website, with updates including the integration of the cruise line's booking system to allow visitors to book online.

The site also offers more intuitive navigation and has a focus on destinations-offering information, videos and photos.

See www.azamaracruises.com.

TODAY'S CRUISE WEEKLY

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

MSC back in Tunisia

MSC CRUISES IS REINSTATING CALLS TO THE Tunisian port of La Goulette from Jul this year, following a stabilisation of security in the nation and a return to "normal".

As such *MSC Fantasia*, *MSC Lirica*, *MSC Splendida* and *MSC Sinfonia* will feature calls to Tunisia in their seven-night summer Mediterranean itineraries, whilst MSC has confirmed it will feature Tunis calls during *MSC Splendida's* seven-night cruises sailing between Dec 2011 and Mar 2012.

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Western Mediterranean

The current strength of our currency is making a cruise holiday in Europe more affordable than ever.

One part of Europe that has plenty on offer for the cruise passenger is the Western Mediterranean.

It would be difficult to find one cruise itinerary that covers every port in this region but it would certainly be easier and far less taxing on the wallet if your clients choose to discover this region by ship.

A Western Mediterranean cruise is also a great way to overcome any potential client's objection to cruising (you know the one that thinks they will get bored).

Cruise Lines typically offer itineraries ranging from seven to 14 days with major embarkation ports being Civitavecchia (Rome, Italy), Barcelona (Spain) and Southampton (UK).

Historically cruise lines only offered itineraries in the Mediterranean through spring, summer and autumn but these days opportunities can be found year round.

Most itineraries will revolve around Spain, France and Italy with some amazing ports of call that will showcase the best of Europe's history and culture.

Most will offer a good balance between sea-days and days in port, giving clients the opportunity to get off the ship and explore as well as plenty of relaxing time on board.

One port worth looking out for is Monte-Carlo, an administrative division of the world's 2nd smallest country, Monaco.

Despite its size, the view upon entering the protected harbour of Monte-Carlo is quite spectacular and once ashore, the city is easily explored on foot.



Brett Jardine

Brett Jardine
General Manager
ICCA

SeaDream changes Europe program

Longer Med cruises, Turkey's Turquoise Coast, Black Sea and Athens roundtrips have been added for 2012.

CRUISE WEEKLY HAS OBTAINED DETAILS OF SeaDream Yacht Club's revised 2012 European program after it failed to secure a charter for London's Olympic Games.

In an exclusive interview with the company's director of business development in Australia, Julie Denovan, it was revealed that the schedules for both *SeaDream I* and *SeaDream II* have been "tweaked".

The line recently cancelled next year's North Europe and Baltic cruises and is still finalising the new plan, Denovan said.

"*SeaDream II* was originally expected to be under charter for the 2012 Summer Olympics, however that did not materialise, and given that our most consistently popular destination is the Mediterranean, both for individual bookings and charters, it made the most sense to fill the demand there rather than keep chasing an Olympic charter," she said.

SeaDream will now offer two new Black Sea itineraries in 2012 as well as several Croatia and Greek Isles voyages.

And for the first time, SeaDream will operate an Athens-Athens itinerary with maiden calls along Turkey's Turquoise Coast.

"Due to the change of the Greek cabotage

law, which previously prohibited us from sailing Athens to Athens voyages, we can now sail roundtrip, which opens up new opportunities to sail the Turquoise Coast of Turkey with many unique islands and ports for both *SeaDream I* and *SeaDream II*," Denovan said.

Cruise durations have also been extended for next year, Denovan confirmed.

"To meet a growing demand for longer than our traditional seven-night sailings, we will be offering several 10-nights and 11-nights in the Mediterranean in 2012," she said.

For details of itineraries, see next Tuesday's consumer issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

Voyager in China 2012

ROYAL CARIBBEAN SAYS THE CHINESE DEPLOYMENT of *Voyager of the Seas* signals the next wave of expansion for the cruise operator.

Voyager will be deployed on a series of four to ten night itineraries departing from Shanghai next year, prior to her ground breaking cruise season in Sydney.

Kicking off in Jun 2012, *Voyager's* inaugural China season will see the 3,114-pax megaliner join her smaller, sibling, the 1,804-pax *Legend of the Seas* which will begin her fourth season in the region in Mar 2012.

Royal Caribbean CEO Adam Goldstein said China was "a key area for Royal Caribbean International's global development."

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Fred Olsen in Bangor

THE NORTHERN IRISH PORT OF BANGOR RECEIVED Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' *Black Watch* for the first time ever yesterday, following the cruise line's decision to add the port to *Black Watch's* 2011 destination line-up.

The call is part of *Black Watch's* current 10 Jun 'Dublin & Around the UK' voyage.

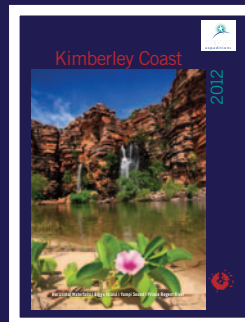
For more see www.fredolsencruises.com.

Civil war and the Queen

AMERICAN CRUISE LINE'S HAS ANNOUNCED THAT next year it will host Civil War themed cruises onboard its *Queen of the Mississippi* sternwheeler.

The voyages will retrace the steps of the American Civil War, and will feature era-inspired cuisine, music and entertainment - see www.americancruiselines.com.

Brochure of the week



Aurora Expeditions has launched its new Kimberley Coast 2012 brochure, which showcases three 11-day adventure itineraries along the Kimberley Coast.

The first two itineraries depart roundtrip from Broome, taking in the Kimberley Coast as well as the Lacepede Islands, Horizontal Falls, Montgomery Reef, Raft Point and Bigge Island.

The third itinerary travels from Broome to Darwin, and offers many of the same highlights as its predecessors, plus the King George River and Joseph Bonaparte Gulf.

Voyage prices start from \$6,990pp/ts.

To celebrate the launch, Aurora is offering a 10% discount for the first 20 passengers who book on any of the three itineraries.

Agents get up close with Puss in Boots in an Oasis



ROYAL CARIBBEAN RECENTLY TREATED A GROUP OF Flight Centre and Infinity Agents to a seven-night Western Caribbean faml onboard *Oasis of the Seas*.

Whilst escaping the Aussie winter, agents enjoyed onboard highlights such as *Oasis's* flow rider, rock climbing and fun flying fox facilities, as well as a plethora of bars, shows and restaurants.

Onshore, agents had the opportunity to climb Caribbean waterfalls, partake of an authentic Bob Marley tour in Jamaica, party in Cancun, traipse the Mayan ruins and learn their fascinating history, and swim with dolphins and turtles.

The agents are pictured left hanging out with Puss in Boots (back row from left) Amanda McNamara, Cruiseabout Manuka;

Christensen, Escape Travel Terrigal; Liz Stott, Flight Centre Windsor; Angie Reilly, Infinity Cruise Brisbane; Kylie Burch, Royal Caribbean Cruises Australia (front row from left) Yvonne Symons, Flight Centre Caringbah; Puss in Boots; James Keros, Flight Centre Chadstone.

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Hanseatic unification

PHOTOS HAVE SURFACED THIS WEEK OF THE updated features onboard Hapag-Lloyd's luxury small expedition vessel, *MS Hanseatic*, following her 13 day drydock stay in Germany during May-Jun (CW Tue).

The work required the services of over 400 shipyard employees and included the



renovation and modernisation of two cabin decks (renovated cabin pictured left with new

furniture, fabrics and carpeting); the buffet restaurant (pictured right), which was renamed



Bistro Lemaire; and the sauna and pool area.

Agent to enjoy the honeymoon of the Century

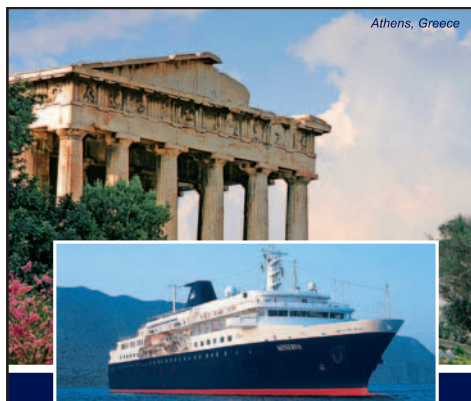
Fiona Armaro of Cruisefinder in Western Australia is excitedly preparing for her second honeymoon, after winning a free 12-night voyage onboard *Celebrity Century*.

Recently married, Fiona scooped up the cruise as part of a Celebrity Cruises promotion celebrating the arrival of *Celebrity Century*.

The promotion

gave agents an entry into the 12-night cruise draw for every Celebrity Australia, New Zealand or South Pacific summer 2011-12 sailing booked between 09 Mar and 09 Apr.

Fiona is pictured above (right) in her WA Cruisefinder office with Celebrity Cruises' DSM for Western Australia, Bronwen Milsom (left) who presented her with the prize certificate and a wall canvas of *Celebrity Century*.



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Winter sailing in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI IS AIMING TO BECOME A SOUGHT-AFTER spot for winter sailing and water-sports enthusiasts, with the creation of a new Destination Village, ahead of the Volvo Ocean Race 2011-12 two-week stopover in Jan next year.

The 55,000m² Village is being built on the Abu Dhabi Corniche breakwater adjacent to the Heritage Village, and is being designed to serve as a sailing centre once the Volvo Ocean Race fleet sails out of the UAE capital.

Work to ready the Village includes dredging a section of the Corniche lagoon to allow 4.5metre race yachts entry, as well as the construction of permanent yacht pontoons.

The maritime themed Village will also have wet and dry areas and will feature exhibitions, shows, simulators, game zones, food and beverage outlets and merchandise shops.

"This, we hope, will be the start of a renaissance in the uptake of sailing locally," said His Excellency Mubarak Al Muhairi, Director General, ADTA and Managing Director, TDIC.

It is expected the Village will be completed and open free-of-charge from 31 Dec 2011.

Orion is Gourmet Traveller

ORION EXPEDITION CRUISES HAS BEAT OUT competitors to scoop this year's *Australian Gourmet Traveller Magazine Readers' Choice Award for Best Cruise Line*.

No stranger to the award, Orion has been named Reader's Choice for the past two years, with the latest award taking the cruise line to a hat-trick.

"Orion Expedition Cruises continues to receive recognition from around the world as much for its approach to environmental responsibility and tourism sustainability as for the way it manages to balance luxurious accommodation and quality service with expedition style remote-location experiences," Orion said in a statement.

Le Boat 1500 hybrid

HOLIDAY BOATING SPECIALIST, LE BOAT, HAS TAKEN delivery of 29 hybrid Le Boat 1500 cruisers.

Built by the world-renowned Groupe Bénéteau, the Le Boat 1500 Series is a new generation of hybrid cruiser which features a spacious saloon, music system, flat screen TV, DVD player, large windows, open plan kitchen galley, hotel style cabins with en-suite facilities, full sized beds, full standing height and level flooring throughout, as well as a huge sundeck with folding sun canopy.

The Le Boat 1500 also features an ultra quiet engine, solar panels to charge the battery and air conditioning.

The company has also ordered a further 100 Le Boat 1500's for delivery in 2012.

Face to Face

WELCOME TO FACE TO FACE, CW'S THURSDAY FEATURE WHERE WE CHAT TO CRUISE INDUSTRY LEADERS.

This week we talk to **Allison Portus** Marketing and Communications Manager for **Bill Peach Journeys**.

How did you get into the cruise industry?

We saw that there was a lot of growth in the cruise industry and felt that our clients would like to see this in our international programs. Our business is at the luxury end of the market and so cruise companies such as River Cloud, Silversea and Seabourn were a natural fit for our clients.

Where do you see your company in five years?

As the leader in small group luxury cruise journeys.

What is the key to your company's success?

Our success with cruising is that we keep our groups to a maximum size of 20. We see our journeys as an intimate experience, private group shore excursions and with pre and post tours staying at hotels such as the Mandarin Oriental or Orient Express properties.

What is your favourite destination, and why?

I loved Ho Chi Minh City. The city has a real buzz to it and has changed so much since the last time I went there 10 years ago. The people are kind, the food amazing and the shopping is very inexpensive.

How do you spend days at sea?

I always do a gym class in the mornings and then when we get into port I like to do my own exploration of a city. On the days at sea I read a book, swim, take part in cooking classes or attend lectures and chat with other passengers.

How can cruising continue to grow in the current financial climate?

I think cruising is actually very affordable and very good value for money- especially on the cruise ships that have US currency. I think we can see with the growth in cruising in Australia. Our cruise business has doubled in the past three years.

What do you think is the most underrated/overrated aspect of cruising?

I think that the most underrated thing is that once on board you really don't have to pay for anything else, especially on ships such as Silversea and Seabourn. Overrated: can't think of anything I would change about my first cruise experience, only that no one told me I would need to go on a diet afterwards!

Just for fun!

Favourite ship: *Silver Shadow*

Favourite ship activity: Yoga and Pilates

Favourite shore excursion: Ho Chi Minh Shopping

Favourite region: South East Asia

Favourite port: Singapore

Favourite onboard food/drink: Dinner in La Terrazza

Favourite perk of the job: Getting to travel in luxury to amazing places



PORTHOLE

BRINGING WATER WILDLIFE HOME.

A couple of local London police found themselves in a sticky situation after discovering four three-metre West African dwarf crocodiles in a semi-detached house in the suburban town of Croydon.

The police arrived at the house on an unrelated matter, however their attention was soon drawn to the quartet who were stashed away in an upstairs bedroom.

According to wildlife experts West African crocs are unlikely to kill humans, but are very likely to take an arm or two from anyone unfortunate close enough.

Following their discovery the crocs were relocated to a nearby wildlife park.

WILL THIS MP BE JOINING A RUGBY CRUISE?

New Zealand MP, Clare Curren, was given her marching orders from the nation's Parliament recently, after turning up in her favourite Super 15 rugby team's jersey.

The blue and gold Otago Highlanders jersey caused controversy when Curren wore it into the NZ Parliament chamber, in protest to the Highlander team's management decision to change the club's uniform.

According to reports, NZ Parliamentary Speaker Lockwood Smith took umbrage to the jersey, and had her ejected from the chamber, saying her manner of dress did not comply with Parliamentary dress standards.

BLUE LOBSTER.

A lucky lobster caught off the coast of Canada's Prince Edward Island has managed to avoid the boiling pot, by the simple virtue of a genetic mutation which made it blue.

Yes that's right, a blue lobster.

According to reports the mutation which turns lobsters blue only happens to around one in every million crustaceans, and is caused because of the over-production of a certain protein.



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