

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 09 February 2012

Scenic Emerald enters French waters

Scenic is extending its Space-Ships' reach in Europe, with the deployment of *Scenic Emerald* in France from April 2013.

AS part of the deployment *Scenic Emerald* will cruise along the Rhone and Saône rivers in Southern France, offering itineraries including a 14-day South of France River Cruise.

Other itineraries include a 23-day Normandy, Loire Valley & France voyage, a 27-day France River Cruise & Splendours of Spain adventure and a 27-day Grand European River Cruise, which all combine the 14-day South of France River Cruise onboard *Emerald*, with other European itineraries on Scenic Space-Ships (and in the case of the 27-day France River Cruise & Splendours of Spain adventure with land touring as well).

French ports of call on the itineraries include Chalon-sur-Saône, Beaune, Tournus, Mâcon, Trévoux, Lyon, Vienne, Tournon, Viviers, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Avignon and Arles.

Emerald will also offer a 15-day Rhine & Rhone River Cruise, with ports of call including Chalon-sur-Saône, Mâcon, Lyon, Vienne, Tournon, Viviers, Avignon and Arles.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* about the move Scenic Tours gm of Sales and Marketing, Michelle Black, said that with *Emerald's* 2013 positioning Scenic believes it is getting ahead of the pack, with the company predicting that the Southern France route will be one of the most sought-after in the coming years.

"The countryside of South Eastern France is simply astounding in its beauty and the

journey from Chalon-sur-Saône to Arles along these waterways becomes even more spectacular as we travel further south," she said.

"At Scenic Tours we are committed to creating new travel experiences and the popularity of recent introductions like our Russia River Cruises is powerful evidence that we need to keep evolving with new products.

"The feedback from our returning guests underpins this strategy," she added.

Emerald will arrive on the Rhone and Saône rivers in early 2013, with her transfer aided via the use of an ocean carrier.

Once in Southern France she will offer a total of 14 sailings between Apr and Oct, with cruises priced from \$6,595 per person twin share for the 14-day South of France River Cruise in an E category cabin.

Itineraries for *Emerald's* 2013 Southern France season are on sale now.

See www.scenictours.com.au.

Silversea expands sales team

SILVERSEA Cruises is expanding its sales and marketing team with the appointment of Cathy Tees as its new head of field sales and national account manager.

Tees comes to the position with a wealth of cruise industry experience, having served as a former vice-president training for the International Cruise Council of Australia, as well as having part-owned and managed Harvey World Travel in Winston Hills, and most recently been the national sales manager for Trafalgar Tours and river cruising for ten years.

Meanwhile Julie Donaldson, has also been appointed as acting BDM, while Martine Nunes is on maternity leave.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's trade issue of *Cruise Weekly* features four pages packed with all the latest cruise news and photos.

German cruises open up

GERMAN cruise line TransOcean Cruises of Bremen has indicated that it will open up departures to English speaking guests onboard its 650-passenger ocean vessel *Astor*.

According to reports, the cruise line hopes that by allocating English speaking departures across a range of itineraries in the Mediterranean it will attract enough English-speaking guests to offer a program of shore tours conducted in both English and German.

To support its efforts, the company has launched an English website, as well as an English language brochure.

See www.transocean.de/en.

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ICCA UPDATE

ICCA General Manager,
Brett Jardine

Cruise Industry Awards

This Saturday night marks the 11th anniversary of the annual cruise industry awards.

This year's event is being held at one of Sydney's leading hotels, the beautiful Hilton Sydney.

There really is nothing like an industry awards night where achievements from the previous year are recognised.

With the cruise industry awards, the night is all about our cruise line members recognising support from the retail trade and media.

There are a number of categories acknowledged that include the best cruise promotion by an agency, the best cruise promotion by a network, the cruise industries rising star, consultant of the year and agency of the year that is presented as a Gold, Silver and Bronze winner.

Also recognised are the media who play their part in promoting cruise through the many articles that are published week after week throughout Australia and New Zealand.

And finally there is always one individual who over the years has made a significant contribution to cruising that is recognised via our Neil Frazer award.

This award is presented in honour of the late Neil Frazer who was a pioneer in the local cruise industry and aims to recognise an outstanding contribution to the cruise industry by an individual.

This year will be by far our biggest event attended by 420 guests with popular TV identity Lisa Wilkinson as Master of Ceremonies for the night.

We look forward to acknowledging some very special accomplishments from 2011, good luck to all the finalists!



A new Spirit emerges for Australia

Carnival Spirit has emerged from her two week drydock sporting seven million dollars worth of upgrades, ahead of her arrival in Sydney this year.

KEY upgrades to *Spirit* included a revamping of her Serenity area, one of the largest child-free adult retreats on the ship, which includes an open-air deck with pool, heated spa, hammocks, plush lounges and a cocktail bar offering a special daily selection of drinks.

The drydock also included \$450,000 in upgrades to *Spirit's* fitness centre with new cardio and strength training equipment, as well as a Jacuzzi under a giant skylight; and the creation of the child-magnet Splash Zone, which includes the Power Drencher, a massive tipping bucket that fills up with hundreds of litres of water, then tips and soaks all underneath it.

New carpets were also laid through all public areas and in cabins, plus *Spirit* was also treated to a new coat of paint on her interior and exterior, whilst cabins scored new flat-screen TVs.

Most notably, *Spirit's* star attraction, the world's steepest and fastest waterslide at sea, Green Thunder was also installed, and was broken in on the vessel's debut Hawaiian cruise post-makeover.

Onboard for the celebrations was the Australian winner of the Green Thunder naming competition, Elke Faulwetter, who was one of the first to take the plunge and "thunder" down the super speedy slide.

"I've shared the photos and my experience on Green Thunder with a number of agents and the most common reaction I get is "Wow, I can't believe that's on a cruise ship!," said

Jennifer Vandekreeke, director, Carnival Cruise Lines.

"About half the agents claim they're going to give it a go, and the other half reckon they'll just spectate.

"When they see the photos of Serenity and the SplashZone, they frequently state that this will really change Australians' perceptions of cruising," she added.

Despite the drydock work, it's not all said and done just yet for *Spirit's* Aussification, with Carnival confirming that over the next six months she will undergo further upgrades to her food and beverage program, including the installation of an Aussie BBQ area.

When she arrives in Oct, *Spirit* will also receive Australian power points, feature Australian currency onboard and her American-style 'slot machines' will be swapped for traditional Aussie pokies.

MEANWHILE, speaking about the response of Australians to *Spirit* in the lead-up to her arrival Down Under Vandekreeke said "we've seen an unprecedented response to the Cash Back promotion that we launched in January".

"Each week, it's exciting and rewarding to see so many agents make their first ever booking on *Carnival Spirit's* Australian itineraries," she added.

Carnival's new PR manager

AINSLEY Pope has been secured by Carnival Australia as its Public Relations Manager.

Free Alaskan shore tours

AMERICAN Cruise Lines is offering free Alaskan shore tours this upcoming summer season (**CW** Tuesday).

For details visit www.americancruiselines.com.

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Evergreen cruise council

EVERGREEN Tours has joined the members ranks of the International Cruise Council Australasia, becoming the ICCA's 27th member cruise line.

Speaking about the move Angus Crichton, gm of Evergreen said "With our tours taking in Europe's scenic rivers and partnering with the Cruise Council's member cruise lines in Alaska, this is a great opportunity for Evergreen Tours to build its profile amongst the cruise industry and travel agents".

Gateway to the Ukraine

GATEWAY Travel has released 2012 pricing for Ukraine Cruises aboard the *MS Dnieper Princess*.

Itineraries covered in the 2012 season include an 11-night voyage from Kiev to Odessa, which features port calls at Kaniv, Kremenchuk, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson and Sevastopol, and runs between Apr and Sep.

The voyage is priced from \$2,361pp/ts in main deck outside cabin accommodation (with private bathrooms), and includes meals, excursions with English-speaking guides, a welcome cocktail reception and farewell gala dinner, as well as Ukrainian language and cultural classes and concerts.

See www.russian-gateway.com.au.

Royal fares for the holidays

ROYAL Caribbean is hoping to lure school holiday families onboard *Radiance of the Seas'* 18-night cruise from Sydney to Hawaii with the temptation of \$299 per person return flights from Hawaii to Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane.

Departing 05 Apr 2012 at the end of her Aussie season, *Radiance's* repositioning cruise takes in ports of call including Tahiti and Bora Bora and is priced from \$2,499pp (less that \$156 per day for all meals, accommodation, entertainment and flights).

Of particular interest to families onboard *Radiance* is the Adventure Kids program (for ages 3-17) which features activities such as arts and crafts, movie nights, karaoke and sport.

Meanwhile the cruise line is also reminding cruisers that there are still berths left on *Radiance's* 18-night South Coast and New Zealand cruise departing 06 Mar 2012 from Perth, taking in ports including Esperance, Western Australia, Dusky Sounds and Sydney.

Prices for this cruise start at \$2,099pp, see www.royalcaribbean.com.au.

Sapphire Princess revamp

SAPPHIRE Princess has embarked on her first cruise from Los Angeles to Hawaii after a extensive three-week renovation.

The ship received several Princess Cruises signature features including the Piazza atrium with the International Café and Vines wine bar, plus the new Alfredo's Pizzeria, as well as a giant Movies Under the Stars screen on the top deck, and the adults-only Sanctuary.

Also part of the ship's makeover were several relocated and upgraded venues, including the art gallery, internet café and library, and the photo-video gallery.

New carpet, upholstery and tile work were added throughout the ship, and cabins now feature new flat-screen televisions.

"Making these changes to *Sapphire Princess* was an important step to ensure that our signature shipboard features can be found wherever our passengers want to sail," said Jan Swartz, Princess Cruises executive vp.

Ortelius and the Penguins

POLAR cruising specialist, Oceanwide Expeditions has expanded its 2012-13 Antarctic season with three Weddell Sea Emperor Penguin Voyages and two Ross Sea voyages.

The voyages will take place onboard the cruise line's *MV Ortelius*, which it acquired late last year from Aurora Expeditions (at the time of purchase the ship was *Marina Svetaeva*).

The new flexible 10-night Penguin itinerary departs roundtrip from Ushuaia and crosses the Drake Passage and the Antarctic Convergence, before heading to the Waddell Sea, where guests will enjoy possible highlights (depending on weather conditions) including a landing at Brown Bluff, helicopter expeditions to reach Emperor penguin colonies, and visits to Devil Island, Vega Island, Hope Bay, Half Moon Island and Deception (for Pendulum cove).

Waddell Penguin voyages will depart 14 Nov, 24 Nov and 01 Dec 2012 and are priced from €7,950pp (approx AU\$9,760pp).

Ortelius' 32-day Ross Sea Discovery cruises take guests from Ushuaia to the Southern part of the Antarctic peninsula, Petermann Island, Fish Islands, the Bellingshausen Sea, Peter I Island, the Amundsen Sea, Shephard Island, the Ross Ice Shelf, Ross Island, Cape Evans, US-station McMurdo, Scott Base, Cape Adare and Macquarie Is before arriving in Invercargill (NZ).

The Ross Sea voyages depart 16 Jan and 18 Feb 2013 and are priced from €17,150pp (approx AU\$21,065pp).

See www.oceanwide-expeditions.com.

P O R T H O L E

NO formal conclusions yet? No problems-run it anyway.

Not even a month after the disaster and certainly well before the conclusion of formal enquiries into the *Costa Concordia* disaster, National Geographic has announced that it will air a "moment-by-moment" documentary detailing the tragedy.

Told through the eyes of those who experienced it, the one hour documentary titled 'Italian Cruise Ship Disaster: The Untold Stories', is set to air in the US on 13 Feb 2012, and weaves together stories from passengers, crew members and Coast Guard rescuers with home video and CGI to reconstruct the sinking of the *Costa Concordia* "as it happened".

As yet, it is unknown when the documentary will go to air in Australia.

WATER monsters are real?

A cameraman is claiming to have captured proof of the existence of the legendary Icelandic lake serpent Lagarfljót's Worm, whilst filming at it's supposed place of residence, the river Jökuls' í Fljótssdal, in east Iceland.

In parts of Northern Europe, the worm is held in the same kind of esteem as the Loch Ness Monster, and is mentioned in Icelandic legends as far back as 1345.

Unfortunately for the cameraman, according to legend, sightings of the serpent are usually a bad omen.

The black streak is the evidence. So worm or no worm?

New ICCA Training Manager

THE International Cruise Council Australasia has appointed Peter Kollar as its new training and development manager.

Peter comes to the role having most recently served as a product manager with Cruiseabout, looking after training, strategy and development across their NSW retail network.

US travel agency introduces no cruise deposits

A major American travel agency group is now allowing clients to book a cruise without putting down a deposit.

ONE of the largest sellers of cruises in North America, CruiseOne, has launched an unprecedented 'book now, pay later' promotion for 2012 and early 2013 sailings.

The company will front the deposit, up to US\$500, for clients who book by the end of Feb.

Customers then pay back the money to CruiseOne at the time that full payment for the cruise is due — generally about 75 days in advance of sailing.

Valid for cruises departing between Jun 2012 and Feb 2013, the offer excludes non-refundable fares and cruise lines which require final payment at the time of booking.

Owned by World Travel Holdings, CruiseOne has more than 750 locations nationwide.

Full details of the promotion, 'Our Gift To You', are provided on the Florida-based travel and cruise company's website: www.cruiseone.com.

The new m/s Paul Gauguin

SPECIAL offers are now available for the newly renovated m/s Paul Gauguin, which was unveiled on 27 Jan.

Paul Gauguin Cruises' is offering 50% off standard cruise fares, plus special fly/cruise fares.

Additionally, clients who book the seven-night 'Tahiti & the Society Islands' cruise by 18 Feb will receive a gift package of US\$100 per-person credit at the onboard Deep Nature Spa by Algotherm, a box of Leonidas chocolates, and flower turndown service — valued at US\$230.

The US\$7 million renovation — the largest in the small ship's 14-year history — includes new flooring, carpeting, furniture, window treatments, and decorative wall panels; a new built-in banquette and expanded gaming in the Casino; improved dancefloors, and new signage.

The 332-pax Paul Gauguin is the highest-rated and longest continually sailing luxury cruise ship in the South Pacific, visiting destinations including French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Fiji and Tonga.

For details, see www.wiltrans.com.au.

Europa leaves Fiji early

BAD weather conditions forced Hapag Lloyd's Europa to skip several Fijian stops last week "in the interest of safety".

Europa left Fiji on 30 Jan, skipping calls at Lautoka port and the Yasawa Islands, heading instead for Noumea's Isle of Pines.

Brochure Spotlight

Silversea's new 2013 Voyage Calendar features 20 pages covering the cruise line's entire fleet offering of more than 200 voyages to over 450 destinations across seven continents in 2013.

Highlights of the brochure include three World Voyages, including Silver Whisper's 115-day World Cruise; as well as Silver Spirit's inaugural calls in Hawaii and Silver Explorer's new expedition cruises to Canada's Hudson Bay.

The brochure also features onboard spending credits of up to \$1,500 per suite on all voyages (with the exception of Silversea Expeditions).



Capt's house arrest extended

THE captain of the Costa Concordia is to remain under house arrest for an extended time.

According to news agencies, the judge declined prosecutors' requests to return Francesco Schettino to prison and his attorney's argument that he should be released.

Schettino is currently facing charges of manslaughter and abandoning ship for his role in the Concordia disaster.

Silver Spirit explores the Pacific

NEXT year Silversea's Silver Spirit will host a 31-day Pacific round-trip cruise from LA, across the equator to French Polynesia exploring the Marquesa Islands and Nuku Hiva, before cruising the lagoons of Rangiroa, the Tuamotu Archipelago and Moorea, with overnight stays in the lagoons of Papeete and Bora Bora in the Society Islands.

From Tahiti, Spirit will take guests through the Line Islands to Kiribati, Fanning Island, and the Hawaiian Islands taking in Hilo and Kona on the Big Island, Nawiliwili on Kauai, Honolulu on Oahu and the exotic Lahaina on Maui.

Silver Savings fares for the voyage start from \$15,199pp double occupancy in a Vista Suite.

For details see www.silversea.com.

Murray Princess combo

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is promoting a cruise and land package combining the highlights of South Australia.

The trips starts with three or four nights cruising the Murray River aboard its largest paddlewheeler, the Murray Princess, followed by one night in Adelaide and two days on Kangaroo Island.

Passengers experience day trips to Aboriginal sites, a sheep station and a native wildlife shelter, plus a wide range of other nature-based activities.

A five-night package starts at \$1,879pp/ts.

Valid for travel from Apr 2012 to Mar 2013, prices include outside cabin accommodation, all meals, onboard entertainment, plus one night post-cruise at the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel in Adelaide and an overnight stay and touring on Kangaroo Island.

An optional Barossa Valley add-on tour is also available.

See www.captaincook.com.au.

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