



SeaDream Australian sales up 40%

The Australian market continues to account for a disproportionate percentage of the luxury yacht company's business.

BOB Lepisto, president of SeaDream Yacht Club, visited Melbourne and Sydney this week to build on the increasing success of the local market.

Reporting a record-breaking year, Lepisto said the company had seen its greatest rise in Australian clientele, including several charters.

"Year in, year out, we increase our business in this marketplace," he said at a media lunch on Tuesday.

"2012 is up 40% on 2011; last year was up 30% and the year before was up 20%."

Australians comprise 10% of SeaDream passengers in the Mediterranean as well as its new itineraries in the Amazon, and about 10% book back-to-back voyages, Lepisto said.

"I'm really pleased with the response from the Australian market to the new places we go.

"The percentage of Australians on our Amazon voyages is extremely impressive, and I think it's because they tend to be very adventurous."

He said there was "a good complement" of Australian guests on the 13-day 2013 circumnavigation of the Black Sea and the 2013 Gallipoli voyage.

"We are finding a lot of Australians are wanting to pay 100% upfront now because we're priced in US dollars," he said.

Charter business is also booming, with a significant number of Australian bookings.

"Business from Australia isn't only individuals

and small groups but also incentive groups and full charters," Lepisto said.

"We've had five car companies from Australia in the Med and a private charter for an Australian businessman's 60th birthday."

Charters account for 25% of SeaDream's total business, with pricing starting from US\$650,000 per week.

SeaDream will return to the Med, Caribbean, Black Sea and the Amazon in 2013, including some Upper Amazon roundtrips from Peru with extension options to Machu Picchu.

Cabins are still available for 2012 Med itineraries, Lepisto confirmed.

"We've sold out Black Sea, and the Caribbean is such a big air ticket from here, but we have good quality space left in the Med, which we are looking to fill in a positive way."

For details, see www.seadream.com.

All inclusive Crystal Cruises

CRYSTAL Cruises has begun its transition to all-inclusive cruising, with the debut of free fine wines and premium spirits, open bar service in all lounges, and pre-paid gratuities for all housekeeping, bar, butler and dining staff, onboard *Crystal Symphony's* Miami to Lisbon Trans-Atlantic cruise which departed on 19 Mar.

The all-inclusive transition has been in the planning stages for the last 12 months and will be rolled out onboard *Crystal Serenity* during her Trans-Atlantic sailing on 08 May.

TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's trade issue of *Cruise Weekly* features five pages of cruise news and photos.

Fred Olsen's Balmoral

THE largest and newest ship in Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' (not NCL's) fleet, the 710-cabin *Balmoral*, is hosting a 12-night *Titanic* memorial cruise which follows *Titanic's* original Apr 1912 itinerary (**CW** 15 Mar).



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ICCA UPDATE

ICCA General Manager,
Brett Jardine

Port Spotlight - New England cruising

New York: A favourite port of call as well as a home port for many cruise lines.

New York is well known as the city that never sleeps and arguably one of the most exciting cities in the world.

In 2011 New York had 267 scheduled calls by cruise ships bringing 645,000 passengers and crew to the city with an estimated US\$160 million in spending.

According to the local cruise authority, NYCruise, in delivering hundreds of thousands of tourists each year the cruise industry contributes significant investment into the local economy.

There are many attractions that cruise passengers find accessible in this great city- the lights of Broadway, Central Park, the Yankees and many different cultural as well as culinary experiences.

Boston: Generally the first port of call after embarking in New York will find cruise passengers in the city of Boston as part of a Canadian New England itinerary.

The fascinating city of Boston has been welcoming cruise visitors for over a hundred years and now boasts a newly expanded cruise terminal.

The Black Falcon Cruise terminal welcomed more than 310,000 visitors in 2011 from over 100 ship visits.

Boston is rich in history, offers award winning restaurants, a multitude of museums serving many interests, and world class shopping – an excellent combination for the cruise passenger.



CDU shines at Cruise Shipping Miami

Cruise Down Under has returned from the industry's premier international conference with an optimistic outlook for Australia's continued popularity.

A RECORD number of CDU members participated at last week's Cruise Shipping Miami, expanding their presence with a larger stand and meetings with the world's leading cruise lines.

Chris White, CDU chairman, told **CW** the conference was "extremely busy and productive" and hailed it a success for the 12 delegates.

"The cruise lines were very buoyant about the coming season and took the opportunity to fine-tune arrangements and to discuss opportunities beyond 2012/13," she said.

"They continue to be extremely optimistic about Australia as a source market and a destination, with a number of the speakers at the conference discussing Australia's spectacular performance in recent years."

White said she was confident that the local market would again produce enviable figures of growth.

"Although the ICCA is yet to report its 2011 results, it is likely that they will be positive, given the increased capacity in the region in 2011 and the overall strong outbound travel results for the past year," she said.

CDU shared its new-look stand with Cruise New Zealand, and Tourism Queensland and Tourism New Caledonia South also exhibited at the event.

Other CDU delegates included the organisation's general manager Jill Abel; Peter

Raines, Darwin Ports; Thor Elloitt, Fremantle Ports; Tyler Wood and Mark Alfano, Bob Wood Cruise Group; Anne McVilly, Tasmanian Travel Centre; Irene Morgan, Destination NSW; Rachel Telford, Tourism WA; and Leah Clarke, SATC.

Meanwhile, top executives of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) spoke about cruising's safety record and policies as well as the industry's prospects.

Howard Frank, vice chairman of Carnival Corporation and chairman of CLIA, said: "We have faced setbacks in the past, and in each case we have shown tremendous resiliency.

"We have every reason to look to the future with confidence that cruising will remain a vibrant industry and we will continue to build on the last thirty-plus years of extraordinary growth."

CLIA's president and ceo Christine Duffy highlighted many of the factors in the industry's success: a 125% increase in passengers since 2000, including a record 16.3 million in 2011; the introduction of 143 new ships during that time; and the launch of 25 ships between 2012 and 2015, including 14 this year.

Cruise training at TAFE

HUNTER TAFE has announced a new qualification for students wanting to enter the cruise industry, the Diploma of Tourism (Cruise Operations).

Delivered at the Hamilton Campus in Newcastle, the course consists of Tourism, Hospitality and Events content and includes a dedicated day per week of cruise contextualisation, delivered by ex-Princess Cruises hotel officer Jonathan Sharp.

Email jonathan.sharp2@tafe.nsw.edu.au.

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Azamara Quest and Australian agents take on Hong Kong

THIS group of Cruiseeco agents recently enjoyed a cruise aboard the *Azamara Quest*, sailing from Singapore to Hong Kong.

The eight-day voyage stopped in Ho Chi Minh City on the way, with the group having two days to experience everything about the city, which was once known as Saigon.

On the final night of the sailing, the group dined at *Quest's* specialty restaurant Aqualina before disembarking in Hong Kong.

Pictured left from the back left are: Helmut Pensch from Landmark Travel; Christopher Nowrojee; Rodney Orrock and Paul Mason.

Middle row: from left are Charlotte Clarendon, Claremont Cruise & Travel; Veronica Cherry; Natalie Cherry, Noosa Cruise & Travel; Helen



Talman, Mary Rossi Travel; Christina Shepherdson, Azamara Club Cruises; Penni Mason, Bayview Travel; Kerrie Lee, Phil Hoffmann Travel and Richard Kaesler.

In the front row are: Josephine Dawkins; Kathryn Millet, Alpha Travel; Melinda Ryan, Azamara Club Cruises and Libby Orrock from St Ives Travel.



CRUISING gets animated.

Disney Cruise Lines is set to animate meal times with a brand new dinner show in the Animators Restaurant onboard the soon to debut *Disney Fantasy*.

Starring none other than Disney favourite, Mickey Mouse, the show invites diners to draw a character on their placemat, which will be incorporated into an animation which is played at the end of dinner.

The show then starts with Mickey Mouse as a wizard who transforms various still-life black and white "Mickey's" around the restaurant into moving colourful Mickey's, before a clip of food inspired moments from Disney films is played.

Following the clip and the collection of the diners drawings, guests eat alongside images of Disney characters enjoying meals.

After dinner Mickey the wizard returns to show the "animation" of the guests drawings which dance across the room.

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Royal Caribbean in the UK

NEXT year, Royal Caribbean will base its 3,114-guest *Adventure of the Seas* alongside her sister ship the 3,634-guest *Independence of the Seas* in Southampton for the northern hemisphere summer season.

The move marks the first time that Royal Caribbean has had two ships in the region.

After her arrival in Southampton on 24 May 2013, *Adventure of the Seas* will offer a series of seven-, 12-, 13-, 14- and 16-night cruises with schedule highlights including a seven-night France and Spain cruise departing 24 May and calling at Vigo, Gijon, Bilbao and Le Havre (Paris); as well as a 14-night Mediterranean Cities cruise departing on 07 Jul and 13 Oct with ports of call including Malaga, Cannes, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Valencia, Cartagena, Lisbon and Vigo.

Meanwhile *Independence of the Seas* will arrive in Southampton on 02 May and will feature a series of short voyages including a two-night cruise to Paris, and three- and four-night cruises to Zeebrugge (Bruges), Belgium and Le Havre (Paris), France.

Whilst in Southampton, *Independence* will also feature six and eight-night cruises to Norway; 14-night Norway and Cork cruises; 14-night Mediterranean voyages; and 12 night Canary Islands sailings.

Fares for *Adventure's* Southampton season start at \$1,929pp, whilst fares for *Independence's* season start at \$2,329pp.

Viking Europe air deal

VIKING River Cruises is launching its 2013 season with a strictly limited return economy airfare to Europe for just \$995 (from all major gateways in Australia); as well as earlybird discounts of up to \$1,000 per couple.

Guests who book by 31 Jul 2012 will also receive bonuses such as airport transfers, gratuities and a complimentary onboard beverage package worth up to \$900 per person, see www.vikingrivercruises.com.au.

Rhapsody broadens its dining

ROYAL Caribbean's *Rhapsody of the Seas* is currently undergoing a major four-week renovation in dry-dock, with five new signature dining establishments being added to the liner.

Modernising it to bring it into line with the company's new Oasis-class vessels, the ship will offer a new variety, and a total of seven, dining options upon its return to the waters.

Among the selections being added will be Chops Grille, the company's flagship steakhouse, along with Italian and Japanese options, in addition to a gourmet market-style setup offering soups, sandwiches and pastries.

G Adventures cruise Africa

IN a company first, G Adventures has released its inaugural sailing program in West Africa, with voyages scheduled onboard *M/S Expedition*.

The program includes three itineraries, which together visit more than 10 African nations, including a 12-day Accra to Dakar adventure which takes in Takiradi (Ghana), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Bijagos Archipelago (Guinea-Bissau), Banjul (The Gambia), and Dakar, (Senegal), priced from \$5,450pp.

The program also includes an 18-day Cape Town to Accra cruise which stops in Luderitz and Walvis Bay (Namibia), Lobito (Angola), Pointe Noir (Congo), São Tomé and Príncipe, Cotonou (Benin) and Lome (Togo), from \$8,495pp; as well as a 27-day Cape Town to Dakar voyage taking in Luderitz and Walvis Bay, Lobito, Pointe Noir, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cotonou, Lome, Takoradi, Freetown, Bijagos Archipelago and Banjul, from \$12,495pp.

For full details see www.gadventures.com.

Win a European cruise

DISCOVER the World Marketing Travel is giving one lucky agent the chance to win a seven-night yacht cruise to either the French and Italian Rivas or Southern Italy and Malta.

Celebrating the release of its 2012/13 Discover Cruising brochure, and the launch of Variety Cruises' Mega Yacht the 36-cabin *Variety Voyager*, the prize gives the winning agent the choice of either a seven-night Romancing the Mediterranean roundtrip voyage from Nice onboard *Variety Voyager*, or a seven-night Treasures of South Italy and Malta cruise from Salerno also, on *Voyager*.

To be in the running, simply tell Discover the World Marketing Travel in 25 words or less "Which is your favourite Variety Cruise onboard the *MY Variety Voyager* as featured in the new Discover Cruising 2012/13 brochure, and why".

Departures for the Romancing the Mediterranean itinerary leave every Saturday between 14 Jul and 25 Aug 2012, whilst the Treasures of South Italy and Malta voyages depart every Saturday between 15 Sep and 13 Oct 2012.

See www.discovertheworldtravel.com.au to get a copy of the brochure, and email your answer to retailres@discovertheworldtravel.com.au by no later than 14 Apr for your chance to win.

Europe and Alaska for Princess

PRINCESS Cruises' recently released 2013 brochure features Mediterranean itineraries for the new *Royal Princess*, as well *Grand Princess*' debut in Alaska.

The youngest fleet in Europe will be operated by the company through the Mediterranean, Baltic and Scandinavia, with fares starting from \$1,309pp for a seven-night cruise from England to Spain aboard the *Crown Princess*.

Alaskan cruises aboard the remodelled *Grand Princess* start from \$899, with the most balcony staterooms available on this vessel for passengers to enjoy the inside passage.

Operating seven ships in both regions, Princess Cruises commercial director Stanley Birge said "Whether they choose the variety of historic and cosmopolitan ports of Europe or the amazing wildlife and stunning glaciers of Alaska, we have the perfect itinerary to take them there."

For fans of longer cruises, a selection of options spanning 10- to 15-days or more are also available in both Europe and Alaska.

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Oceania in the Opera House



ABOVE: 10 of the top NSW agents for Oceania Cruises were treated to dinner at Bennelong Restaurant followed by a concert at the Sydney Opera House by renowned saxophonist Chris Botti, last week.

The event was hosted by Julie Rose, vp of International Sales & Marketing for Oceania.

Pictured above inside the Opera House, from left are: Gail, Travelview; Alison, HWT Barracks Street; Megan, Cruiseview; Gerd, Landmark Travel; Julie Rose, Oceania Cruises; Maria, Travel Creations; Louise, Saba Travel; Brad Wicks and Debbie Collins, Oceania Cruises and Lucy from Travel Creations.



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Face to Face: Christine Gardiner Business Development Executive NSW and ACT, MSC Cruises

Welcome to Face to Face, where we chat to cruise industry leaders.

How and why did you get into the cruise industry?

After joining the Travel Industry in 1988, first with airlines, moving onto hotels and now cruising I look forward to completing a full circle of my experiences and bringing a holistic approach to a very exciting industry.

What is your favourite destination and why?

Venice! After my first visit to Venice in 1985 travelling as a single girl, I stayed at the Hotel Al Giardinetto ...

I since went on to meet my husband of 20 years in 1988, his name....Allen Gardiner!

How do you spend days at sea?

My favourite day would be sitting in one of the pods by the pool, reading, sleeping, reading and sleeping! Or dinner is also my favourite meal, chatting about all the activities of another exciting day at another cultural location.

What is the next hot spot in cruising destinations?

The Caribbean is popular with families wanting to experience the East Coast of America and South America as Australians are looking for new and exciting destinations.

How can cruising attract more families?

When selling MSC Cruises it is very easy to take a client on a journey by talking about the fabulous activities on board for parents and children and also the value. MSC Cruises allow children under 18 years of age to travel free when sharing a cabin with two adults, a great incentive for families.

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

Definitely the Yacht Club upgrade! Consider this, your own 24-hour butler, all inclusive drinks in exclusive bars, restaurants and more. All for an addition \$35 per person per cabin upgrade from a Balcony Suite with MSC.

What is something you wish more agents and consumers knew about cruising?

MSC Yacht Club!

What are your career ambitions?

Due to being new to the cruise industry, I look forward to this year, absorbing as much industry knowledge from the cruise experts around me.



Christine's Cruise Favourites!

Ship Activity: Day spa

Region: Provence

Perk of the Job: Talking about cruising everyday and being out and about meeting new people

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