



## Christmas cruises merrily on high

River cruise lines are rejoicing in the record numbers of Australians celebrating Christmas on European cruises.

SINCE 2010, Avalon Waterways has seen Australian bookings for Christmas cruises increase an average 24% per year, APT has added extra departures to cope with demand, and Uniworld reports "phenomenal business" from the local market.

"Five years ago, Australians couldn't imagine a white Christmas," John Molinaro, general manager, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, told *Cruise Weekly*.

"We had nobody on our ships from Australia or New Zealand, but now it's become very big." Avalon's double-digit growth is also set to

continue, according to Christian Schweitzer, marketing manager Australasia, Globus.

"The allure of authentic traditions is a strong buying consideration," Schweitzer said.

"I've encountered a number of Australians that have taken these cruises in early December, having stocked up on gifts and goodies from the Christmas markets, and returned home in time for Christmas to make it all the more authentic."

Australian-owned APT introduced its first Europe river cruises covering the Christmas-New Year in 2011 and for the following season it has added later departure dates to cater for passengers who wish to stay at home for Christmas but "still discover the magic of a winterland holiday".

APT general manager marketing, Debra Fox told *CW*: "The trend over this short period is showing that the demand for Australians to travel to Europe in winter is increasing.

"APT is finding that its loyal past travellers who have cruised in summer are coming back to experience Europe river cruising during winter and to visit the Christmas markets."

Fox said clients also used the holiday season to visit friends and relatives in Europe for Christmas and to attend New Year celebrations.

## P&O UK to revamp vessels

P&O UK has announced that its *Ventura*, *Oceana* and *Arcadia* vessels are scheduled to enjoy a series of makeovers over the next few years, which will include the installation of 18 new single cabins onboard *Ventura*.

*Ventura's* Las Ramblas bar and restaurant will also be replaced with The Glasshouse, whilst a Retreat will be installed on Deck 16.

A new dance floor will also be laid in *Ventura's* atrium, whilst her retail area will be revamped, her library will be upgraded to feature digital functions, and her cabins will be made over with new carpets, bed covers, cushions and mattresses.

*Ventura* will resurface from her 13-day makeover for her first voyage on 07 Apr 2013.

Meanwhile *Oceania* will go in for her works on 05 Dec 2012 for 11 days, and will enjoy a refresh of her Oasis Spa, shops and Sundaes ice-cream bar; whilst new seating will be installed in her Casino, Le Club and Horizon Grill; and new lighting and sound equipment will be updated in her Le Club.

*Oceania* will also be decked out with a new Marco Pierre White menu in Cafe Jardin; and new carpet, linens, curtains and mattresses in her cabins.

*Arcadia* will go in for her makeover in Dec 2013, and will have her cabins refreshed, her shops refitted, new soft furnishings in her Crow's Nest and Ocean Grill, as well as the addition of several single cabins, whilst her The Globe will be replaced with a new late night dance spot titled Electra.

## All aboard for the first NCW



STAFFERS at Travel the World are revelling in the inaugural National Cruise Week this week, with celebrations spilling out to include decorating the TTW offices cruise-style.

As part of its National Cruise Week celebrations the company is also hosting a questionnaire about the specials on offer this week, and is holding a competition for the best dressed nautical theme with vouchers as prizes.

Some of the TTW staffers are pictured above getting into the NCW spirit (from left) Back Row: Bianca Fletcher, Alexandra Spinolo, Samantha Bicknell, Gemma Scott, and Front Row: Serisha Sewgambar-Ramdhani, Vera Guo, Rose Lin, Wings Wong, and Andrew Zhang.

## ALL THE CRUISE NEWS

Today's trade issue of *Cruise Weekly* features three pages jam packed with all the latest cruise news.



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Brett Jardine - General Manager, ICCA

## New Horizons doubles cruise sales

After 200% growth in one year, New Horizons Holidays has significantly expanded its cruising range.

**THE** Travel Corporation-owned wholesaler this week announced an expansion into cruises in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Asia and Scandinavia, with additional cruise lines to be rolled out soon.

Chris Evans, managing director, New Horizons Holidays, said: "We've witnessed growing demand in the market for cruising, more than doubling our sales this year, and in response we've diversified and widened our cruising product range."

The company currently sells MSC, Holland America Line, Star Cruises, Classic International Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Azamara, Costa and Celebrity Cruises.

Evans said the company had seen "robust demand" for Azamara at the premium end of the market, and *Norwegian Epic*, particularly for solo travellers.

"With our cruise sales growing by more than 200% this year, we've also started to see a shift in buying patterns, with many of the Royal Caribbean International brands, like Azamara and Celebrity Cruises, experiencing strong growth and increased demand, bringing their sales in line with some of our most popular Star Cruise product," he said.

"Of course, with our product range diversifying and expanding, we're also growing our team to support the trade with two dedicated cruising consultants on hand to assist agents with their cruise bookings."

An example of New Horizon's deals is the 'Australia and Asia Fly, Stay & Cruise', priced from \$2699ppts for a 15-day *Voyager of the Seas* cruise to Singapore from Perth (9 Mar 2013) also including hotel accommodation and airfare.

For details, call 1300 302 230 or see [www.newhorizons.com.au](http://www.newhorizons.com.au).

## National Cruise Week Success

During the weeks leading up to National Cruise Week we experienced a flurry of interest from agents all over the country wanting to get involved.

Overwhelmingly the feedback we have received around the concept of National Cruise Week has been phenomenal from our members and many have shared stories of what activity they have undertaken.

Seeing retailers pro-actively embrace the concept, organising events, contacting their local media and connecting with their client base to let them know about National Cruise Week has been the most satisfying aspect from our point of view.

A major promotion like this can't get off the ground without all of us working together for the greater good of our cruise sector so congratulations to all of you that have put in the effort and are reaping the rewards this week through a spike in your cruise sales.

I hope there is nobody still sitting behind their desk waiting for business to come strolling through the door (although we have heard of plenty of easy sales being made this week) but if you are, it's not too late to at least communicate with your database that now is a great time to be talking about taking your 1<sup>st</sup> (or next) cruise holiday.

From editorial organised by the ICCA as well as targeted ads in major newspapers and extensive discussion on many radio stations, our media monitoring service has confirmed that the coverage of cruise across many forms of media all over Australia and New Zealand in the last two weeks has been nothing short of staggering!

## Steiner and Silversea

**SILVERSEA** has extended its agreement with Steiner Leisure until 31 Dec 2015, meaning that Steiner will continue to operate the hair salons, beauty, massage, fitness and spa facilities onboard Silverseas fleet for the next three years.

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Pictured left is Gemma Smith from City Beach Travel with Miss J. Alexander, America's Next Top Model Coach!



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## Hublot keeps Seabourn time

**SEABOURN** has appointed luxury Swiss watchmaking brand, Hublot, as its Official Timekeeper.

As such, all six ships in Seabourn's fleet will feature handsome Hublot wall clocks, whilst the watchmaker will also feature on Seabourn's website and in other marketing materials, and Seabourn vessels will also play host to trunk shows of Hublot timepieces to guests on selected voyages.

"Hublot's distinctive porthole-styled timepieces are crafted with a commitment to innovation grounded in respect for tradition," said Seabourn's president Richard Meadows.

## Check out the Galley

**ROYAL** Caribbean is inviting cruisers behind the scenes of its culinary exploits, with a new video titled 'From Galley to Table: Training Makes Royal Caribbean Dining a Delight'.

To view the video **CLICK HERE**.

## Adventure in Panama reduced

**ADVENTURE** World has reduced the price of a seven-night Panama to Costa Rica cruise departing 09 December by 35%, for bookings made before 31 Oct.

The seven-night cruise onboard *Star Flyer* sails from Balboa, Panama to Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica, and includes highlights such as visits to Isla Iguana, and the beautiful coastline of Drake Bay.

With the discount, the voyage is priced from \$1,825pp, see [adventureworld.com.au](http://adventureworld.com.au).

## APT: Partner of the Year

**TRAVELSCENE** American Express has named APT as its Partner of the Year.

The award was doled out at Travelscene's national consultants conference and recognised APT's overall excellence in reservations service, documentation and administrative support, sales representation, product delivery, marketing campaigns, brochures, and customer satisfaction.

## DTW's Norwegian launch

**DISCOVER** the World has partnered with Hurtigruten to launch a new 2013 Norway & Scandinavia Brochure.

As part of the launch, Discover the World is also debuting a new look and branding under the Discover the World Cruising name.

Highlights of the brochure include six-, seven-, 11- and 12-day Classic Norway Coastal Voyages onboard Hurtigruten; 25% Early Booking Savings; as well as a selection of pre and/or post cruise hotel stays; train journeys and tours; and a sampling of SeaTour options to complement any voyage including: stays at Sognefjord Luxury Guesthouse including the Bergen Railway & Flam; and a unique Winter Wilderness Lodge Expedition with dog sledding and snow mobile touring.

"We are extremely excited to launch our 2013 Norway & Scandinavia brochure featuring new voyages and destinations" said country director, Birgit Eisbrenner.

"Our 2013 Norway & Scandinavia brochure now features more products including a wider range of touring options and accommodation to create an exceptional and unforgettable experience for our clients," Eisbrenner added.

## Le Boat brokers for Afloat

**LE BOAT** is now a Broker for Afloat in France, by Orient-Express.

Afloat in France offers five luxury all-inclusive barges that cruise the rivers and canals of France, and which are available on a private-hire or per-cabin basis.

"Le Boat provides the best in self-drive cruising for its customers, so we are excited to represent the best in luxury, all-inclusive barging with Afloat in France," said Cheryl Powell, chief operating officer of TUI Marine.

"We promise to bring the best to our customers and with this partnership we will; whether guests choose to experience the leisurely pace of waterways cruising by doing it themselves or being taken care of by the professional crew," she added.

See [www.leboat.com.au](http://www.leboat.com.au) for details.

## TWO months of climate change.

The peoples of Manus Island in Papua New Guinea have initiated a two month long-canoe voyage throughout the Pacific region to raise awareness of climate change.

Themed 'Bridging the gaps between the Pacific-connecting countries' the voyage is aimed at inspiring community based action to halt climate change, including conservation projects and marine protection initiatives.

According to voyage organisers, the use of the long-canoe also ensures minimal environmental impact.

During its sojourn, the canoe will cover some 10,000kms, and will visit the New Ireland province, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Kosrae, Ponape, Truk Island, Puluwat, Sorol, Yap, Palau, Aua Wuvulu, Ninigo and Hermit Islands.

## Princess welcomes spring

**PRINCESS** Cruises is farewelling winter, welcoming the warmer months, and preparing for the upcoming wave season, with the launch of a range of special spring fares.

The limited-time-only deals include a two-night cruise from Sydney to Brisbane on *Sun Princess*, departing 22 Oct 2012, priced from \$299 per person twin share.

Further deals include an 11-night Queensland cruise on *Dawn Princess*, departing Sydney on 06 Nov 2012, priced from \$1,299 per person twin share.

The latter cruise will also offer passengers an opportunity to view the upcoming solar eclipse.

See [www.MyCCS.com.au](http://www.MyCCS.com.au) for details.

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