

# CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 18 September 2012

## Egypt & Tunisia cruises in confusion

Ships are skipping ports after violence in Cairo and Libya and warnings from other countries in Africa and the Middle East.

CRUISE lines continue to keep a close watch on anti-American protests around the world, with several itineraries changed in order to

avoid problem areas in Egypt and Tunisia.

Royal Caribbean's *Mariner of the Seas* has cancelled tomorrow's scheduled call at Alexandria, Egypt, and will instead dock at Sicily, Italy, and Valletta, Malta.

The company said it altered the itinerary "in an abundance of caution" and would contact passengers or their travel agents in case of additional modifications to other cruises.

Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth* also skipped Alexandria on the weekend and replaced it with Rhodes, Greece.

On Friday, Holland America's *Ryndam* called at Sardinia, Italy, instead of La Goulette, Tunisia.

This change was made due to "the potential for continued protest activity there," HAL said.

However, MSC Cruises issued a statement overnight that the situation had "normalised" and all operations, including shore excursions, would take place as planned.

Norwegian Cruise Line also confirmed to *Cruise Weekly* that no changes had been made to any itineraries.

The disruptions follow the recent easing of Government travel warnings to Egypt.

Earlier this month the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade lowered its warning level for Egypt overall.

Travellers to Sharm el Sheikh, a popular cruise port, "are strongly encouraged to travel by air", it said.

Yesterday, the Australian Government updated its warning for Tunisia to "exercise a high degree of caution" after violent protests in front of the US Embassy in Tunis and "the risk of further violence and civil unrest and the threat of kidnapping and terrorist attack".

Costa, Princess, Silversea, Pullmantur and Thomson (UK) also have upcoming cruises with ports of call in Egypt and Tunisia in September.

For the latest advice, contact your travel agent or cruise line and see [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au).



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Ask The Expert

with  
Aleisha Fittler

CRUISE Weekly would like to welcome our Expert for the month of September, Aleisha Fittler, Scenic Tours General Manager of Product for Europe and Canada. Every week we will be calling for questions from our readers which we will pass on for Aleisha to answer. So if you have a burning river cruise question, be sure to email it to us at [expert@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:expert@cruiseweekly.com.au).

For Aleisha's answers click on the Facebook link at the end of each question or visit [facebook.com/cruiseweekly](http://facebook.com/cruiseweekly).

**Q1 from Michael Don:**

What age range is river cruising for? I'm in my 30s and want to know if it will cater to me, or should I look at a different type of cruise? 

**Q2 from Louise Craig:**

Do people get seasick on river cruises? Also, what type of medical facilities do your ships have onboard in case people get sick? 

Email your questions for Aleisha to [expert@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:expert@cruiseweekly.com.au)

## Costa Victoria's short cruises

FOR the first time ever *Costa Victoria* will offer a range of three-, four- and seven-night cruises from Singapore to Malaysia and Thailand.

The short cruises will take place between November 2012 and early January 2013 and will include a three-night Discover Historical Wonders voyage to Port Klang and Malacca; a four-night Relaxing Sun Drenched Vacation to Langkawi and Penang and a seven-night All-in-One trip to Kuantan, Bangkok and Koh Samui.

See your travel agent for details.

## TODAY'S ISSUE OF CW

Today's issue of *CW* features five pages of the latest cruise news, plus a full page from Oceania Cruises detailing its 2013 Alaskan collection (**page six**).

Also see **page seven** for three special deals from Cruise Select.

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## Cruise Calendar

*Cruise Weekly's* cruise calendar details upcoming port calls of passenger cruise ships at various destinations in Australia.

SYDNEY  
*Pacific Jewel* Mon 24 Sep

BRISBANE  
*Pacific Dawn* Sat 22 Sep

## Worldwide cruise boom

OVER 20 million people took a cruise holiday last year, a 10% increase on 2010 figures.

The numbers come from data compiled by worldwide cruise industry bodies, and showed that the largest number of cruisers are coming from North America and Europe (with British cruisers the second largest source of cruise passengers in the world).

## Carnival Spirit ready for Australia

A month before moving to its new home in Sydney, the American ship's 'Aussification' is complete.

THE barbecue has been installed, the parties are planned and the new food and drink choices are finalised.

After a US\$7 million transformation, Carnival Cruise Lines' *Carnival Spirit* is officially prepared for its new market of Australian passengers.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* from Carnival's headquarters in Miami, the line's Senior Vice President of Guest Relations, Mark Tamis, said the team had "done a great job of Aussifying" the formerly US-based ship.

"Fat Jimmy's C-Side BBQ, on the highest deck, one deck above the pool, has seating on both sides overlooking the water," Tamis said.

The complimentary menu includes chicken breast, hand-pulled pork sandwiches, Black Angus beef sausages, salads, jacket potatoes, grilled vegetables and onion rings.

*Carnival Breeze*, which launched in July, is the only other CCL ship to have the outdoor barbecue facility.

*Cruise Weekly* can also reveal that *Spirit's* beer selections will include VB, Tooheys New, Carlton Draught and XXXX on tap, as well as Pure Blonde and Crown Lager bottles.

Wines are sourced from Australian and New Zealand wineries, including Marlborough, Hunter Valley and McLaren Vale.

Another major change is the expansion of theme nights, which will now start in the main restaurant at dinner and continue with a deck party all night.

But the themes, celebrated with fancy dress,

music, games and specialty cocktails, will not be Australian.

"We asked our Australian fans on our Facebook page for the two most popular themes and they picked Mexican fiesta and Caribbean beach parties," Tamis said.

The 2,680-passenger ship is currently sailing from Seattle to Alaska, before embarking on a 16-night repositioning voyage from Hawaii, arriving in Sydney on 17 October.

"Almost half the passengers booked on that cruise are Australian," Tamis said.

"They're going to bring it in for us."

For more Carnival Spirit details see [www.carnival.com.au](http://www.carnival.com.au).

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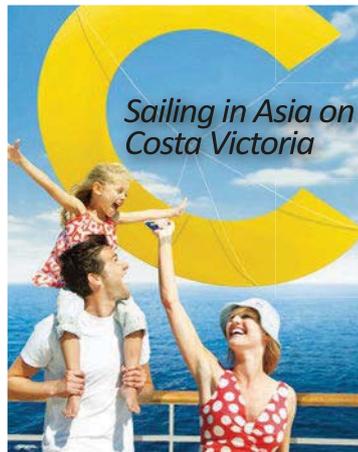
## Last Minute Deals

This weekly column highlights hot deals on cruises departing soon – ideal for our spontaneous readers.

Check out this week's cruise bargain:

### 33-night Circumnavigation from Sydney onboard *Sea Princess*

- **From:** \$3,859pp
- **Departs:** 18 October 2012
- **Visits:** Sydney, Brisbane, Port Douglas, Darwin, Lombok (Indonesia), Geraldton, Fremantle, Adelaide, Melbourne, Fjordland (NZ), Wellington (NZ), Napier (NZ), Tauranga (NZ) and Auckland
- **Includes:** 33 night cruise, all onboard food and entertainment, and 24-hour room service.
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WEEKLY

Tuesday 18 September 2012

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## Crew Profile

This week *Cruise Weekly* speaks with **Mihai Manolache, Master of Scenic Tours' Scenic Sapphire.**

**How long have you been working on cruise ships?**

I've been working on cruise ships for more than 15 years now.

**When did you join the cruise company you are currently working for?**

About three years ago.

**What is the best thing about working for this cruise company?**

For me personally, it is that this cruise company is a very fair employer that offers decent working conditions, and treats their staff with respect. That's not always the case elsewhere.

**What is your favorite cruising destination?**

Vienna. It's one of our longer stops so we can sometimes get out and about. There is so much to do and see here, from culture, to shopping to sports.

**Briefly explain what your job entails and what passengers can expect from your services on board.**

My top priority is to get passengers from one destination to the next safely and on time. Of course, I also want them to have a great holiday, so I try to do my bit by being available to answer questions and tell them a little about life on board and the rivers we sail on.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Sunrise on the bridge when everything is still quiet. That can be truly magnificent.

**Who is the most famous person you have served?**

Many years ago as a young officer, I was on a ship that hosted a cruising conference about southeastern Europe. We had the Patriarch of Constantinople, the former kings of Bulgaria and Romania and lots of politicians onboard. Of course, I didn't get to speak to them - I was on the bridge. But it was interesting.

**Do you have any embarrassing cruise stories you can share with us?**

One night we had a passenger who started sleepwalking. He came out in pyjamas and was roaming all over the ship. We tried to talk to him but of course it was no use. Of course, it got really worrying when he started moving towards a staircase, but at the very last minute he turned back. Everyone was incredibly relieved. The next day, he didn't know anything about it.



## Move over Venice, it's Sydney

**SYDNEY** has pipped Venice as the favourite port for Brits to visit, according to a survey commissioned by the UK's Passenger Shipping Association.

The Greatest Journey survey of 2,038 British cruisers saw both Sydney and New York tie for equal first in the favourite ports stakes, each securing 13% of the vote, followed by Venice with 10%.

Interestingly, the survey, launched to mark the debut of the UK National Cruise Week, also found that the major reason Brits cruise is to create "unforgettable memories", whilst the favoured destination for a great journey was voted as a round-the-world-trip.

## Want to go to Cuba and save

**SEA** Cloud Cruises is offering an earlybird sweetener for guests looking at its 2013 Costa Rica and Cuba seasons, by offering savings of up to €350 per person for bookings before 30 September 2012.

The season will see the company's two hand-sailed windjammers, *Sea Cloud* and *Sea Cloud II*, sail along the lush green coasts, idyllic bays and national parks of Costa Rica, Cuba and Central America, which are often inaccessible to many of the larger ships, between January and April 2013.

Voyages in the line-up are priced from €1795 per person (around AU\$2,239pp) for a seven-night *Sea Cloud* Costa Rica cruise from Puerto Caldera on 03 January 2013, with highlights including Lake Nicaragua (the second largest lake in Latin America), and the colonial town of Granada, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as Palo Verde National Park and Manuel Antonio National Park.

See [www.seacloud.com](http://www.seacloud.com) for more details.

## Scenic visits Rastatt Palace

**SCENIC** Tours has added a swag of new experiences for guests to enjoy in its 2013 Europe River Cruises and Tours program.

In amongst the fray is an exclusive evening of music and cuisine at Rastatt Palace in Germany's Black Forest.

Rastatt Palace is the oldest baroque residence on the Upper Rhine and modelled on the opulent French Palace of Versailles.

Guests can see the Palace on Scenic's *15 day Romantic Rhine & Moselle River Cruise*, priced from \$7,095pp twin share including free flights to Europe for bookings by 30 September 2012.

See your travel agent for details.



**EYE** of the tiger.

Of all the animals you may expect to see while cruising, a tiger is probably not top of the list.

Despite the odds, one cruiser, 70-year old Ian Gregory managed to snap a picture of a white tiger whilst travelling onboard *Sun Princess'* recent 104-night world voyage.

Gregory got up close and personal with the rare tiger whilst on an early morning shore excursion to Singapore Zoo.

For his efforts, Gregory managed to win *Sun Princess'* world cruise photo competition.

"This particular tiger seemed quite reflective - he was walking around and then he got into the water and swam close to us ... I felt he was swimming across to me," Gregory said.

The win was a bonus for Ian and his wife Janice, with the Sydney couple enjoying their global odyssey so much they have already booked to travel on Princess Cruises' 2013 world cruise from Australia.



## Reduced Solstice deposits

**CRUISERS** can now score themselves 50% off deposits and up to \$US300 onboard credit for cruises onboard *Celebrity Solstice* this upcoming summer season.

The onboard credit and 50% reduced deposits offer is available on all *Celebrity Solstice* sailings between November 2012 and April 2013 of five nights and longer.

Passengers must book between 16 September to 22 September 2012 to score the savings.

Fares start from \$1,219pp for an Interior Stateroom on a 13-night roundtrip sailing from Sydney around New Zealand, departing 10 December 2012.

See [www.celebritycruises.com.au](http://www.celebritycruises.com.au).

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## Did You Know?

### Evergreen Tours

- ◆ Evergreen Tours has been operating for over 32 years and has toured over 60,000 travellers.
- ◆ The average age of an Evergreen Tours traveller is 59 years old.
- ◆ On an Evergreen Tours river cruise the company uses 6kgs of coffee every morning as well as 1300 eggs per week.
- ◆ An estimated 90 postcards are sold in the boutique shop per cruise.

### Sun Island discounts

**SUN** Island Tours is offering a 50% discount for the second passenger and no single supplement for bookings made on several 2013 Mediterranean itineraries departing between April and October next year, when booked by 31 December 2012.

Prices for the voyages start from \$1,439pp for the Jewels of the Cyclades itinerary. See your travel agent for details.

### Bremen 15-night NZ offer

**LANDMARK** Travel has released a special on *Ms Bremen's* 15-night voyage from Bluff to Auckland.

The deal prices the voyage from \$10,114 (plus \$5,057 for second person in same cabin). See your travel agent for details.

### P&O NRL giveaway

**P&O** Cruises has caught footy fever and is spreading the contagion by giving away two double passes to the NRL grand final, for those who aren't lucky enough to be watching the game at sea onboard one of P&O's Big Screens.

To be in the running to win, cruisers should visit the P&O Cruises Facebook site ([www.facebook.com/POCruises](http://www.facebook.com/POCruises)) and in 25 words or less explain which rugby league captain they would like to see at the helm of a cruise ship.

Two lucky winners will each receive a double pass to the NRL grand final at Sydney's ANZ Stadium where they can cheer on their favourite team in P&O Cruises' style.

The competition is in keeping with P&O's acquisition of the international rights to show live NRL games across its fleet this year.

### Hurtigruten onboard credit

**TO** celebrate its 120th anniversary Hurtigruten is offering onboard credit of NOK 1000 (around AU\$165) per adult for all new bookings on its 12-day Classic Round Voyage from Bergen between now and 30 Nov 2012. Call 1800 623 267 for details.

### Star crashes into Explorer

**STRONG** winds caused *Norwegian Star* to break free of her moorings in Bermuda last Friday, and then pushed her towards a collision with *Explorer of the Seas* which was docked at the next berth.

The wind was clocked at around 83kms/hr when the collision occurred mid-afternoon on Friday, after *Star's* mooring lines broke, whilst passengers watched from onshore and onboard.

No passengers, crew or onlookers were injured as a result of the accident, however both vessels are said to have sustained hull damage.

After inspection, the damage was not considered bad enough for either vessel to be thought unseaworthy, and both continued on with their schedules (albeit *Star's* voyage was delayed slightly).

# WIN

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Costa  
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WEEKLY

Over the next five weeks, **Cruise Weekly** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a 7 night cruise, courtesy of **Costa Cruises**. This amazing prize is valued at over \$4,000 and includes a 7 night cruise on board Costa Victoria from Singapore to Malaysia and Thailand in an Ocean-view Premium twin cabin.

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## Montréal Mon Chéri

by: Roderick Eime

On first look, you might think the Canadian island city of Montréal is too far from the sea to be a real cruise destination, but with its neighbour of Québec, the two fair cities linked to the Atlantic Ocean by the Saint Lawrence Seaway, offer cruisers a wonderful insight into both modern and historic Canada.

Officially founded in 1642 but with archaeological records dating back to the time of Christ, there is plenty of history in Montréal and you can explore it in any of the superb museums within easy stroll of the cruise terminal. The Centre d'histoire de Montréal in place D'Youville will introduce you to the rich and eventful history of Montréal society, while just down the way at Pointe-à-Callière, the Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History digs deeper, literally, into the past with an archaeological dig beneath the museum itself.

Art and design lovers will have plenty to swoon over at any of the galleries like the Museum of Fine Arts, arguably the most prestigious museum in the city. I took one of the free guided tours with volunteer guide, Patrick, and was glad I did. Not normally a fan of the sometimes pompous art tours, Patrick helped me understand the subtleties of Canadian fine art without feeling like a dill.

Also along the wharf is an array of activities ranging from harbour cruises, bicycle hire, horse-drawn carriages and more museums, especially the Centre des sciences de Montréal, where both permanent and temporary exhibits are on offer and handy alternative for inclement weather, although during my stay it was hard to imagine with such glorious weather during my short stay.

If you're going to take a tour, there's lots of interesting stuff beyond the port precinct including foodie tours that visit the

bustling local market and famous bakeries, patisseries and outlets like Fairmount Bagel and Chez Schwartz's smoked meats. Colourful fruits, berries and vegetables make the stalls a photographic delight.

Montréal is often referred to as "Canada's Cultural Capital" and is anything but your average urban metropolis. It thrives on quirkiness, creativity and innovation while retaining a deep respect for the past exemplified by the common use of old French as day-to-day language.

Montréal's cruise season is May to October and is dominated by the HAL vessel, *MAASDAM*, but also sees popular late (Fall) season visits in 2013 by *Silver Whisper*, *Seven Seas Navigator*, *Oceania Regatta*, *Seabourn Sojourn*, *AIDabella* and *Crystal Symphony*. Small ship operator, Blount, also plies the minor waterways with their 100-pax vessels *Grand Caribe* and *Grand Mariner*.

For those starting or finishing a cruise in Montreal, it is my strong recommendation to allow a few days in the city for extra sightseeing and cultural enrichment. Stay at one of the swank new design hotels like LHotel or Chez Swann. You'll be glad you did.

Montreal quickies: Montréal has roughly the same population as Brisbane and is Canada's second largest after Toronto \* Montréal's subway was opened in 1966, has 68 stations and uses the same mechanicals as Paris \* Much of downtown Montréal is underground with 12ha and 32km of tunnels and walkways in the RÉSO \* Montréal was the site of the 1967 World Expo and 1976 Olympic Games \* Montréal's international airport (YUL) handles 13 million pax annually \*

More info: [www.tourisme-montreal.org](http://www.tourisme-montreal.org).



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Offers expire 30 September 2012. Fares listed are AU\$ per person twin share based in lead category as shown as at 20 August 2012 & include non commissionable port taxes, government fees & gratuities. Fares displayed reflect all promotional savings. Valid for new bookings, subject to availability, not combinable with other offers are capacity controlled and may be withdrawn without prior notice. Oceania Cruises reserves the right to correct errors or omissions. Complete terms and conditions can be found in the Oceania Cruises Website [www.OceaniaCruises.com](http://www.OceaniaCruises.com)

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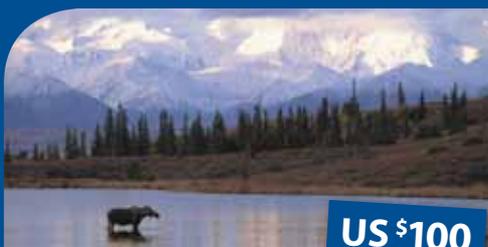
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