



First new Russian ship in 25 years

Volga Dream Cruises is set to launch the first river vessel built from scratch for Russia's waterways since the fall of the Soviet Union.

RUSSIAN Travel Centre has exclusively revealed to **Cruise Weekly** that its Moscow-based river cruise partner will deliver the brand new *MS Volga Dream II* in Mar 2015 – the region's first passenger ship since 1990 to be built from the ground up.

Following the original *Volga Dream*, which was built in 1959 and last refurbished in 2007, it is certain to be a massive improvement on the country's current fleet from the 60s, 70s and 80s.

According to Michael Tonkin, director of sales and marketing at Sydney's Russian Travel Centre, the 81-cabin SOLAS 2010-compliant ship will boast "the latest in technology for navigation and safety as well as a standard of accommodation and service never before experienced on a Russian river cruise ship".

To be built in Croatia, *Volga Dream II* will carry 160 passengers and 69 crew and offer rarely seen features on European river cruises, such as an outside bar and a medical centre



The proposed new *MS Volga Dream II*

staffed by a doctor.

The design also includes 12 two-room suites, including four of the region's largest, measuring 43 sq metres each.

Veranda staterooms, measuring 25 sqm, are said to be spacious with large balconies, and two single cabins are also available.

All rooms have modern ensuite bathrooms (some with baths), individual air conditioning, telephone, satellite and cable TV, a safe, minibar, bathrobes and high-speed wireless internet.

Like most modern ships in Europe, it will have an elevator, lounge, dining room, library, gift shop, conference area, 24-hour tea and coffee station, fitness centre, and extensive sun deck and promenade decks with teak wood flooring.

The family-run Volga Dream Cruises has scheduled the first cruise between Moscow and St Petersburg for mid-Jun 2015.

Prices and sailing dates are expected to be finalised within two to three weeks.

For more info, call the Russian Travel Centre on 1300 668 844.

Queenstown cruiser launched

SOUTHERN Discoveries has this week begun carrying passengers on sightseeing cruises on New Zealand's Lake Wakatipu using its brand new *Spirit of Queenstown* catamaran.

The vessel will operate four departures daily during the summer season to Milford Sound and nearby highlights with capacity for 150 pax per sailing across three outside decks and large indoor seating areas with big picture windows.

Spirit of Queenstown was built in Australia before making the trip across the Tasman via Invercargill in the last week of Jul (**CW** 01 Aug).

All the latest cruise news

Today's trade issue of **CW** features three pages of all the latest cruise information and a full page of jobs from **AA Appointments**.

Go-Go Gadget academy promo

A RANGE of technology prizes have been put up for grabs by P&O Cruises and Princess Cruises as an incentive to travel agents who progress up the ranks of their Academy training programs during the summer.

Entries into prize draws will be given out to agents who graduate to higher levels, with prizes including Dr Dre speakers & headphones, iPod nano units, eReaders and Fitbit One Activity and Sleep Trackers.

All current applicants and new enrolments received by 28 Feb will be eligible for draws.

One entry will be awarded for those attaining First Office ranks, two for Staff Captain, three for Captain and four for Commadore.

Each program contains 24 modules and a final exam, designed to educate & assist agents to boost sales of P&O and Princess departures.

More information & enrolment steps for the academy is available at www.myccs.com.au.

Pearl Seas to debut Caribbean

DEPARTURES ranging in duration from 7-11 nights will form the maiden range of cruises in the Caribbean offered by Pearl Seas Cruises.

Operated by the 210-passenger small-ship *Pearl Mist*, destinations to be visited will include the Bahamas, Turks & Caicos, St Martin, British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Martinique and many more.

The inaugural season will begin from 2015, with itineraries designed to visit a variety of small islands with a range of shore excursions available in each major port.

Staterooms on the *Pearl Mist* all include a private balcony with sliding glass doors, dining room and lounge suites.

Carnival chief maritime officer

VICE Admiral William Burke has been named by Carnival Corporation & plc as chief maritime officer, reporting directly to chief operations officer Alan Buckelew.

The newly created position will see Burke oversee the company's entire maritime operation around the world, including quality assurance, policy, shipbuilding, renovations, refits and research & development, covering the entire fleet of more than 100 ships globally.



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Cruise News
& Views...

Brett Jardine - General Manager

International Volunteer Day

TODAY (05 Dec) is officially International Volunteer Day and the global cruise industry is using today to showcase the continued philanthropic support of port communities around the world.

The cruise industry takes great pride in partnering with local communities to provide much needed assistance to residents of port communities that cruise lines visit, and International Volunteer Day is a good time to reflect on the industry's efforts through volunteer service, charitable donations and cultural preservation programs.

Cruise lines also extend volunteer and philanthropic opportunities to guests, from cruises that are dedicated to charitable causes to cruise lines that offer volunteer opportunities at destinations.

To learn more about the cruise industry's contributions to communities worldwide, visit www.CruiseForward.org or join Cruise Forward by following on Facebook - [Facebook.com/CruiseForward](https://www.facebook.com/CruiseForward).

Membership Renewals

A REMINDER to all CLIA Members that our membership year has changed to a calendar year effective 1st January 2014.

Membership renewals that have been sent throughout 2013 have been pro-rated to 31 December 2013 so your next renewal will be for the full 2014 calendar year.

With a number of exciting global initiatives to be rolled out in 2014 (including the inaugural Cruise3sixty Australia), we look forward to the continued strong support of all our members.

CMV launches Europe river cruising

Cruise and Maritime Voyages is now selling river cruises on the Rhine and Danube in the Australian market.

THE British privately owned ocean cruise line has announced the chartering of the *Vienna 1* river vessel for a series of river cruises to operate next year.

Vilma Rovedatti, sales and marketing manager for CMV Australia said: "This premium plus vessel has been operated by a number of luxury river cruise operators in 2013 and offers a high level of comfort and décor, with most cabins boasting French balconies."

Rovedatti said it was "a natural progression" for CMV to add river cruises to its portfolio.

"CMV are specialists in offering scenic ocean cruise holidays on board smaller sized traditional ships, providing a leisurely and friendly style of cruising with high levels of customer service.

"Our on-board customer questionnaires have indicated that more than 80 per cent of our passengers would consider taking a river cruise.

"We also know that our current cruise programme, that includes many European ports situated on rivers, is already popular."

CMV's first departure of *Vienna 1* - the seven-night Magical Rhine - will commence on 19

May from Nuremberg to Amsterdam.

The 14-night Grand European Discovery cruise will depart on 26 May and will sail from Amsterdam down to the Hungarian capital, Budapest, cruising on both the Rhine and Danube rivers.

On 9 Jun, a reverse itinerary will operate between Budapest and Amsterdam.

These 14 night itineraries are also available as 7-night sectors to/from Nuremberg.

Cruise only prices for the 7-night departures start from \$1798pp; 14 nights from \$3238pp.

A new stand-alone river cruise brochure will soon be available.

CMV currently charters three traditional cruise ships: the *Astor*, which arrives in Perth next week for its inaugural Australian season, the *Marco Polo* and the *Discovery*.

See www.cmvaustralia.com.

Avalon group pre-registration

EXPRESSIONS of interest are now being accepted for Avalon Waterways European sailings of eight pax or more for the 2015 season ahead of general release in early 2014.

Incentives and benefits including early payment discounts and additional commission are available as part of group departures, along with confirmed cabin inventory to assist with formulation of final itineraries.

Globus Family of Brands marketing manager Christian Schweitzer said the company now had two dedicated BDMS for group departures.

"Group bookings have helped our retail partners increase their revenue, and allow them to take advantage of group rebates and additional marketing support," Schweitzer said.

Interest in departures can be registered by phone on 1300 330 334 or by email through groups@avalonwaterways.com.au.

Solo catering on small ship line

MORE than 1,100 new cabins aimed at solo travellers - including 748 on its most popular voyages - will be available on Grand Circle Cruise Line departures in the 2014 season.

The line is expecting more than 12,000 solo travellers next year, adding to approx 19,000 in the last two years - 80% of which were female.



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Retrace Harry's icy footsteps

HURTIGRUTEN has been quick to jump on the bandwagon to offer Antarctic expeditions to allow guests to retrace the expedition currently being undertaken by Prince Harry.

The UK prince is currently on a 335km trek to the South Pole, with more comfortable voyages on sale aboard the *MS Fram*.

Summertime overnight camping experiences on the frozen continent are also available as part of the itinerary - phone Discover the World on 1800 623 267 for more information.



Giveaway



Today, **Cruise Weekly** is giving away four **Sea Siren Cosmetics** collections including Enchanting Exotics, Bewitching Brights,

Captivating Classics & Dreamy Delights - in both sizes (Ocean Bubbles & Wanderlust Minis).

Sea Siren Cosmetics, a new Australian-owned company, has cast off the ropes and launched a range of premium-quality nautically-themed nail polish, made in Australia.

Elegantly packaged, the launch collection offers 25 "sealicious" colours in two sizes to cater for the cruise traveller. The nail polish is also cruelty-free, vegan-friendly and free of 5 nasty toxins.

For your chance to win, check out the range at www.seasiren.com.au and tell us in 25 words or less:

Which colour Sea Siren's nail polish is your favourite, and why?

Email your answer by COB this Friday to:
comp@cruiseweekly.com.au

Serene to extreme itineraries

SEA Cloud Cruises has launched a new range of Sail & Race itineraries in the Mediterranean, combining a cruise on the 94-passenger vessel *Sea Cloud II* with a private track day at the Ascari Race Resort in Andalucia, Spain.

Departing on 13 May next year, the itinerary begins with an eight-night cruise departing from Nice and cruising the French Riviera, calling in at Malaga, St Tropez and more.

The private track day allows guests to learn the art of spin and skid correction, cornering and emergency braking before being let loose on the 26-turn circuit.

A white-knuckle ride with a professional race driver at the wheel completes the track day, with guests then spending the night at the nearby Finca Cortesin, included in fare prices.

Additional departures of similar experiences are available later in 2014 aboard *Sea Cloud*, with a dedicated brochure released detailing the entire range - **CLICK HERE** to view.

Delta ups popular port service

DELTA Air Lines will introduce new daily services between Seattle Tacoma Airport and Fairbanks, Alaska from 29 May - a destination popular as an end point on many Inside Passage cruise itinerary extensions.

The Alaskan town is regularly used by Holland America Line, Princess Cruises and other lines as the end point for several cruise extension itineraries, and follows an expansion of service to Anchorage announced earlier this year.

Service will be a summer seasonal operation flown by Boeing 737-800 aircraft configured with First Class and Economy Comfort cabins.

Carnival new American feasts

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines will roll out a new American-themed dining concept aboard the *Carnival Glory* from the week beginning 08 Dec.

Entitled American TABLE and American FEAST, the new concepts will feature daily changing menus and will be available on casual cruise nights, with classic American drinks and cuisine as well as "rare finds" including Spice Alligator Fritters and Frog Legs Provencal.



WATERBEDS are one thing, but sleeping on the ocean...almost literally...is another.

Popular Great Barrier Reef day cruise operator Cruise Whitsundays has launched a unique product allowing very small groups of up to 12 guests to stay out on the reef and sleep under the stars for the night.

The new experience is titled Reefsleep and is part of a relaunch following an extensive refurbishment project on the line's pontoon at Hardy Reef, 40 miles from the coastline.

Guests of Reefsleep enjoy two full days snorkelling, swimming and reef exploration using a semi-submersible before remaining on the pontoon when day visitors leave.

Optional activities will include helicopter scenic flights, scuba diving or massages.

Bedding is inside a weatherproof sleeping bag lined with a comfortable inner mattress, which can be zipped up or kept open for a true "under the stars" on-water camp out.

A gourmet BBQ and full breakfast is served the next morning to overnight guests, with the entire experience priced from \$399 per person in either single or double swags.

An air-conditioned private double room is also available for guests who don't wish to sleep in the swags.

Preziosa to cruise Brazil coast

NEWEST MSC Cruises vessel *MSC Preziosa*, first launched earlier this year (**CW** 26 Mar), has arrived in Brazil for the first time to begin a series of South American cruise departures.

The vessel will operate from Santos and sail to islands in the north and south of the country ranging in duration from 6-8 nights.

Three other MSC ships will also sail South America over the 2013/14 season, with MSC's *Magnifica*, *Orchestra* and *Poesia* cruising from Santos, Rio De Janeiro and Buenos Aires.

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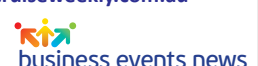
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