



MSC to bring *Orchestra* to Australia

For the first time, MSC Cruises will bring one of its megaliners to Australian waters, confirming a local visit by *MSC Orchestra*.

THIRTEEN ports in eight countries, including six in Australia will be visited by the 2550-passenger vessel as part of a 33-day sailing from Dubai to Australia, scheduled to depart the UAE port on 21 Feb 2015.

Today's announcement marks the debut of one of the luxury MSC Cruises vessels in Australian waters.

CW signing off for the year

CRUISE Weekly would like to wish the entire travel industry a safe, happy and festive Christmas and New Year season, with our final issue for the year being today.

We will be back in 2014, bigger and better than ever, but with our same unwavering focus on bringing you the latest and most important news and features from the cruise industry. See you next year!

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On the way, *Orchestra* will travel through India, Sri Lanka and several Asian ports, visiting Mumbai, Cochin, Colombo, Phuket, Langkawi, Singapore and Bali before arriving in Australia.

The ship's partial Australian circumnavigation will begin in Cairns before travelling down the east coast to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and ending the voyage in Fremantle on 26 Mar 2015.

Australian prices for the voyage start from \$3,299ppts for an inside cabin up to \$5,499pp for a suite, with ocean view cabins and balcony cabins also available.

MSC Cruises managing director Australia and New Zealand Lynne Clark expressed her enthusiasm at *MSC Orchestra's* Australian visit.

"I will be equally excited for our loyal passengers to have the chance to see the cruise ship in their home waters," Clarke said.

MSC Orchestra is the second of the line's Musica Class of ships, launched in 2007 at a price tag of US\$480 million and offers 1,275 passenger staterooms over 16 decks.

Guests on the voyage will also enjoy two overnight stays in Singapore and Sydney.

"*MSC Orchestra* will have an extended stay in Sydney allowing the passengers ample time to tour, shop and even see the Blue Mountains on an excursion," Clarke added.

Maritime collaboration study

PORT logistics and maritime efficiency will be part of an in-depth study by six leading global think-tanks, including University of Sydney Business School's Institute of Transport and Logistics, with industry to be widely consulted.

Packed final CW for 2013

Today's trade issue of **CW** features four pages of all the hottest cruise information.

House full sign at CLIA Awards

CLIA Australasia's annual cruise industry awards gala, taking place on 08 Feb at Sydney's Doltone House at Hyde Park, has now sold out.

Emirates has been secured as new Platinum Sponsor for the event, while Carnival Australia & Royal Caribbean will serve as gold sponsors.

The evening will see the debut of the CLIA Hall of Fame Award, which replaces the Neil Frazer Award, with all previous winners to join the 2014 winner as inaugural members.

"Voting from Cruise Line Members for the Agency & Consultant of the Year has now closed and we've received a lot of entries for the Agency & Network Cruise Promotion categories with our judges now facing the difficult task of choosing winners," CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said.

Along with the new venue, the official after party has been sponsored by CLIA Executive Partner and technology firm TravelTek.

"As always, we're looking forward to a great night with all those who have worked hard to promote the industry throughout 2013".

Sea Siren comp trade winners

NAUTICAL themed Sea Siren Cosmetics nail polish collections are on their way to four trade winners selected in the **Cruise Weekly** competition which was held earlier this month.

Congratulations to Sarah Hutchison, Wings Away Travel & Cruiseland; Rebecca Cranston, Holland America Line; Sarah Pogson, Figtree Travel and Jessica Rendell from Thesinger & Turner Travel Associates, all named as winners.

Accom discount for cruise pax

METRO Apartments Darling Harbour in Sydney is offering cruise passengers a 10% discount off best available rates for the length of their stay to encourage passengers to stay and see more of Sydney - ph (02) 9357 7775.



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Thursday 19 December 2013



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Brett Jardine - General Manager



Cruise News
& Views...

Christmas Cruising

AT THIS time of the year we are all caught up in our own plans for Christmas, but what about your clients?

A great option for many is a cruise with friends and family. OK, so you may be too late for Christmas 2013 but think about this for next year.

Cruise lines are always well prepared for holiday periods and Christmas by no means any different.

With festive decorations and music as well as decadent seasonal treats, cruise lines really know how to celebrate.

For a lot of families, taking a holiday over the Christmas break makes perfect sense - especially if several family members have to travel to one central spot anyway.

Going on a cruise instead of visiting somebody's home means one family member or friend isn't burdened with all the preparation and cooking. Everyone can relax and enjoy whilst the crew take care of everything, including the cleaning.

Then of course there is the entertainment, where crew deliver theatrical shows for the season as well as scheduling fun activities like Christmas music concerts and maybe even some enthusiastic sessions where everyone can join in singing carols!

So what am I up to this Christmas - you guessed it - staying home!!

On behalf of our team at CLIA Australasia, our Executive Committee, Board and CLIA staff from around the globe, we wish you all a very safe and merry Christmas and New Year.

We thank everyone for their support of the cruise industry and we look forward to a very exciting year ahead in 2014.

Christmas booming on ocean & river

This year's festive cruises are almost sold out, with next year's cabins already filling fast.

STUART Allison, Princess Cruises' vice president Australia, reports that the line's 2013 Christmas cruises have been sold out "for some time," he told *CW*.

"As we have continued to add summer capacity to Australian waters over recent years, more and more Australians have responded and are enjoying a relaxing Christmas afloat with Princess," Allison said.

Tony Archbold, Holland America Line's director of sales Australia, said the local office continues to see a growing demand for cruises over the festive period.

"Australians see the great value that cruising presents as well as the opportunity to share their Holland America Line cruising experience with as many or as few people as they want."

A spokeswoman for P&O Cruises told *Cruise Weekly* that all special occasion cruises attract strong interest.

In the case of its Christmas and New Year cruises, P&O has found that the Sydney and Brisbane sailings are drawing an increasing number of interstate holidaymakers.

On the other side of the world, the small capacity of river cruise vessels in Europe has seen cabins snapped up in record time.

John Molinaro, general manager Australia, Uniworld, says Australian bookings have "almost doubled" across the company's seven holiday season itineraries.

Viking order more ocean ships

VIKING Cruises chairman Torstein Hagen says its latest ship order justifies the speed that cabins on its ocean cruises are selling.

The booming cruise operator has exercised its contracted option for two additional ocean cruise vessels, yesterday confirming the order which takes its total requirement to four ships.

"The interest in and popularity of our current ocean itineraries has been incredible, and they are selling at an unprecedented rate," he said.

Italy's Fincantieri shipyard - already building the company's first two vessels - will construct both of the additional liners, which have not been given names as yet.

Estimated delivery for both of the new ships is slated for 2017 at present, with the line's first vessel, *Viking Star*, coming in 2015 and the second a year later and expected to initially operate in the Mediterranean & Baltic regions.

"Five years ago there were few - if any - Australians choosing to spend their Christmas holidays on the rivers with Uniworld, however numbers have been steadily increasing".

Avalon Waterways has completely sold out its Christmas river cruises for 2013, with 2014 nearing 50% sold.

"By the end of March it will be around the 80-85% fully sold mark," predicts Christian Schweitzer, Globus' marketing manager Australasia.

"Demand still appears to be growing and cruises have been selling out faster than in previous years," he said.

APT has also entirely sold out for 2013, "apart from a few cabins", says Debra Fox, general manager marketing, and next year's sales are "looking strong".

Teresa Fors, managing director Australia & New Zealand, Viking River Cruises, said the European winter experience would have a greater appeal if more Australians knew about the diversity of the different themes of the Christmas markets.

"It is such a great way to celebrate the festive season and an excellent way to experience European culture with a small group of travellers, rather than with hordes of other tourists," she said.

Aurora polar video voyage

POLAR voyage line Aurora Expeditions has released a six-minute video showcasing the landscapes and experiences available aboard one of its journeys to the European Arctic.

Filmed in Aug this year, the video is entitled *Jewels of the Arctic* and highlights the Greenland and Spitsbergen regions along with local wildlife and the ice-breaking capabilities of the expedition ship itself.

CLICK HERE to view the film.

Concordia to be towed by Jun

SALVAGE crews have now stabilised the recently upturned hull of the *Costa Concordia*, with the project's coordinator announcing the ship will be ready to tow away by Jun next year.

Costa Cruises officials have also confirmed that 405 onboard safes have been retrieved from the wreck, with contents to be returned.

The ship is now resting on its seabed platform, constructed as part of the righting process.

Preparation work for the vessel to sit in place through the northern winter are being made, with the ship likely to be scrapped once towed.

Australia's top cruise consultant

Lorraine Herring, of Escape Travel Blacktown, NSW, has maintained her lead as the year's highest trained cruise specialist.

THE ranking is based on the amount of education and practical shipboard experience undertaken with Cruise Lines International Association (Australasia) and is officially recognised by the cruise industry.

In second place was Kerry Fox, of Just Cruises, Upper Mount Gravatt, Qld, followed closely by TravelManagers' North Balgowlah NSW representative Diane Craig.

Rounding out the top ten were: Martine Hero, Clean Cruising; Matt Halloran, TravelManagers; Janette Wall, Cruiseabout Turramurra; Robyn Sinfield, Home Travel Company; Janene Ferguson, Jetset South Melbourne; Joel McGlynn, Cruise Shoppe and Guy Batten, MTA Travel, Lane Cove NSW.

Herring, an accredited CLIA Master, has lost count of the number of cruises she has undertaken but her highlight of 2013 was attending Cruise3sixty in Vancouver.

Her advice to other agents is to gain more knowledge and experience to better serve customers.

"It is very sad when you are on a cruise and you get chatting with some other cruise passengers and they are not having the

experience they should be," Herring told **CW**.

"You find them saying things like 'my agent never told me this'.

"The online training that most cruise lines have is invaluable and really goes into great depth, which will help consultants paint a better picture or ensure you are selling the right ship to the right passenger".

Herring also highly recommends agents take opportunities for ship inspections.

"I think all agents should make the time to have a look at the ships that come in," she said.

For the full list of the top 200 cruise consultants, see www.cruising.org.au.

Crystal Cruises go ape in Africa

SILVERBACK gorilla tracking in Uganda has been added as a multi-day overland adventure available as part of a Crystal Cruises itinerary.

Guests booking on *Crystal Serenity's* 18-day sailing from Singapore to Cape Town and the subsequent 21-day trip from Cape Town to London are eligible for the five-day extension.

The two segments form part of *Serenity's* 2014 World Cruise and will see pax venture to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

Guests will view the natural habits of the gorillas, learn about their habits & conservation efforts and be able to see a variety of other wild animals - see www.crystalcruises.com.

Harbour turns pink for Captain Cook Cruises

EARLIER this year, Captain Cook Cruises pledged to donate 10% of proceeds from every Top Deck Lunch and High Tea cruise sold during Sep to the McGrath Foundation.

The aim was to help the foundation reach its target of funding 150 breast care nurses in Australian communities, to ensure every family battling breast cancer had access to a specialist nurse and to continue to raise awareness.

The fundraising drive was supported with a special Sydney Harbour Pink cruise featuring a *Weekend Today* show broadcast starring weathergirl Emma Freedman (**CW** 03 Sep) delivering her reports from aboard the line's *Sydney 2000*.

Passengers helped raise a total of \$3,226 as part of the fundraising, which was matched by Captain Cook Cruises, who yesterday presented a cheque for \$6,452 to McGrath Foundation ambassador and director Tracey Bevan.

"Captain Cook Cruises is delighted to support this great cause and will continue being a corporate friend with the McGrath Foundation again in 2014," CCC head of sales and marketing Richard Doyle said.

"We believe in the strong start to our partnership with the McGrath Foundation this year and thank you to our passengers on board during our High Tea and Top Deck lunches".

Doyle is **pictured** above left with Tracey Bevan and Captain Cook Cruises general manager Anthony Haworth.



Qatar to redevelop cruise port

QATAR Tourism Authority chairman Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi has announced plans to redevelop the country's existing cruise port in Doha into a multi-feature tourist destination.

In addition to an upgraded terminal, the area will see new residential, a retail shopping precinct, hotels and a number of restaurants added to boost the appeal to cruise lines.

Al-Mohannadi described the cruise industry as "a pillar of growth that accelerates our efforts and brings more people to discover the products on offer".

He acknowledged the work all Gulf nations were putting in to harness & develop cruising as a market for inbound and outbound tourists.

"QTA aims to play a major role in developing regional itineraries and facilities in order to make the Gulf region an attractive route to the cruise industry as it gains in prominence as a cruise location," Al-Mohannadi added.

Gauguin release 2015 voyages

A NEW 10-night roundtrip sailing in Fiji and 7-night return cruise in Venice aboard the *MS Paul Gauguin* and *MV Tere Moana* respectively have been announced as part of Paul Gauguin Cruises' 2015 year of voyages.

The new 10-night trip departs from Lautoka, Fiji and visits Ile des Pins, Noumea, Ile De Mare and Ile Lifou, New Caledonia along with Port Vila, Vanuatu, operated by *MS Paul Gauguin*.

In addition, the company's namesake vessel will also operate itineraries ranging in duration from 7-14 nights in Tahiti and also visiting the Society, Tuamotus & Marquesas Islands along with the Cook Islands and Tonga.

Caribbean and Latin American departures will make up the majority of the northern winter months for the *MV Tere Moana*, before making its way back to Europe, where its new 7-night Venice roundtrip itinerary is set to visit Rovinj, Hvar, Dubrovnik, Vis, Sibenick and Split.

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Thursday 19 December 2013



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Aussie agents enjoy the Amadeus Princess

BEYOND Travel recently gave a group of 21 Aussie travel agents and their partners a taste of European river cruising on an eight-night journey from Amsterdam to Basel aboard *Amadeus Princess*.

The experience enabled the group to develop their own love affair with the serene method of travel and to highlight the variety of river vessels available to Australians.

After departing the Dutch capital city, the cruise headed down the Rhine and visited Cologne, Cochem and Koblenz, with highlights including a performance at the Beethoven festival in Switzerland before reaching Basel.

Among the messages the agents took home was the value for money provided on a Beyond Travel river cruise yet still enjoying high service standards, inclusions and onboard facilities.

Pictured above in the Piano Bar from left is Tanille Amiet, Gippsland Travel; Marcela Hrcncir,



St Ives Cruise & Travel; Natasha Melhuish and Erin Beckford of HWT Salamander Bay; Clair Pritchard and Ceri Pritchard, Black Rock Travel; Irina, Amadeus Cruises; Helen McMullen, Cruise Holidays; Terri Dillion, Go See Tours; Boris, Amadeus Cruises; Sorin, Amadeus Cruises; Bryce Crampton, Beyond Travel and Katrina Roberts from Richmond Travel.

MEANWHILE, Beyond Travel has introduced a range of tour products in various parts of Europe with reduced solo supplements.

Marketing manager Bryce Crampton says the solo traveller market is growing "at an unprecedented rate" with the company selling places for single pax on many river cruises, small ship journeys and escorted touring with supplements starting at \$250 over twin share.

Shore Trips & Tours platform

A NEW automated website and booking database is offering FIT cruise clients a one-stop location for booking tours, rental cars and activity tickets.

The site - www.shoretripsandtours.com - is an operational tool for the New Zealand company's suppliers and agents that helps the FIT customer to find activities in each port and manage their own bookings.

Passengers can also use a "Tour Share" function to invite friends and family.

"This feature allows passengers to hook up with others on the cruise before they leave home, so they are then able to share small group private tours if they want," Shore Trips & Tours managing director Ian Holroyd said.

The site only includes product offered by a "real tour company, company, not just a web re-seller", he said.

SeaLink Kangaroo Island Cup

HORSE racing fans can take advantage of a range of new race-day and self-drive itinerary options that have been released by SeaLink focused on the Kangaroo Island Cup, with the ferry operator serving as the major sponsor.

The event is scheduled to take place at the Cygnet River Racecourse on Kangaroo Island from 14-16 Feb, with numerous country racing action and off-track parties on the schedule.

Single-day coach/ferry and track entry deals are available from Adelaide, Goolwa and Victor Harbor, while self-drive packages inclusive of return ferry transport with a car and accom start from \$214pp per night - phone 131 301.

More Celebrity tech gremlins

GAS turbine issues on one of the engines aboard *Celebrity Constellation* have forced the ship to amend its schedule and delayed its departure from Key West, Florida by a full day.

A planned stop in Cozumel, Mexico has now been replaced by Nassau, Bahamas.

New DL cruise port capacity

DELTA Air Lines is continuing to ramp up air capacity to a number of cruise ports in Alaska, announcing a new daily service from Seattle Tacoma to Juneau from Jun next year.

The service will operate during the summer season until 23 Aug and follows recently announced capacity increases on services to Anchorage and Fairbanks (**CW** 05 Dec).

Record Costa Miami capacity

COSTA Crociere has deployed the *Costa Luminosa* to Miami, boosting available capacity from Miami to its highest level ever.

The 2,260-passenger vessel will operate a series of 10-day cruises during the northern winter in the Caribbean region until Mar 2014.



A FLORIDA man has received a citation after trying to use a live alligator as legal tender to purchase a case of beer at a US convenience store.

According to *Associated Press*, the store clerk called police after being presented with the gator as payment for the 12-pack.

Illegally capturing and trying to sell the alligator were the charges on the ticket issued to the man, according to the State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The alligator was in good shape, had not been harmed and was released back into the wild shortly afterwards.

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