



Rail Europe targets cruise market

Travel agents can reap greater rewards by connecting cruise passengers with increasingly convenient train journeys across Europe.

RAIL Europe is seeking a bigger piece of the cruising pie with an expanding range of packages offered by its key distributors Rail Plus, Rail Tickets (JTG), Infinity Rail (Flight Centre) and CIT Holidays.

Travelling with **CW** on Switzerland's Glacier Express between Zermatt and St Moritz, Richard Leonard, manager Australasia for Rail Europe said the time was right to tap into the cruise market.

"With the huge volumes of Australians doing Med, Baltic and river cruises, there is a great opportunity for pre-cruise and post-cruise options by rail," Leonard said.

"For people wanting to extend their trip in Europe, or linking from one cruise to another, rail is best positioned as the most efficient, comfortable, easy and flexible means of transport."

This year has seen a big push toward the new Italo rail service since Italy deregulated its rail system.

"Infinity Rail, which has a dedicated cruise division, is putting together lots of new pre- and post-cruise packages using Italo," he said.

"Italo launched last year as a competitor against the government-run Trenitalia service, so they are offering really cheap wholesale fares that can be used in conjunction with cruises into and out of Venice and Rome."

Scenic Tours and APT have also started offering clients Thalys high-speed train services between Amsterdam and Paris as an

alternative to coach transfers.

"This gives them an extra half a day in Paris, a more comfortable trip, and onboard services such as meals & drinks brought to their table."

All the major European river routes easily connect with the Rail Europe network, he said.

"Even in countries such as Switzerland, which isn't considered to be a key area for cruise passengers, there are so many opportunities for people to get off a ship in Basel and get onto the excellent Swiss Rail system, and then they can transfer seamlessly to the famous Glacier Express or the Golden Ticket."

Leonard said the rail-cruise combination had "boomed" in the past 18 months.

"Because of the evolution of the cruise industry, we are seeing the value of promoting trains as a complementary product.

"Some people may see cruise and rail as competition but there is actually a great affinity between them, with similar onboard services and ambience, getting on and off in city centres, and the convenience of moving from ship to train instead of airports or car hire," Leonard added.

For further information and bookings, visit www.railplus.com.au, www.railtickets.com.au, Infinity Rail (Flight Centre) and CIT Holidays.

Concordia Capt to stand trial

FRANCESCO Schettino, the Italian captain of the *Costa Concordia*, which ran aground off the coast of Italy in Jan last year, killing 32 people will stand trial on manslaughter charges.

If convicted, Schettino could face up to 20 years behind bars for his role in the accident, with the trial to be held in Grosseto on 09 Jul.

The disgraced former captain is also charged with causing the wreck and abandoning ship.

RCI unveil *Quantum* itineraries

STATEROOM reservations will open to the public for Royal Caribbean Cruises' brand new *Quantum of the Seas* on 04 Jun, with the liner's maiden voyage departing 23 Nov 2014.

Bookings will first be available to members of the firm's Crown & Anchor Society loyalty program, opening on 28 May.

The mega-liner's first 18 voyages will range in duration from 7-12 nights, with the initial home port to be Cape Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne, New Jersey.

"We can't wait to WOW vacationers with the new Quantum class," Royal Caribbean Int'l president & CEO Adam Goldstein said.

The ship will feature several revolutionary features, including indoor skydiving at sea, bumper cars, ice-skating rink & rock climbing.

All the best cruise news

Today's trade issue of **CW** features five pages of all the latest cruise information.

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Orion/Lindblad report strong sales

The inaugural season of the *National Geographic Orion* is expected to sell out soon.

THE integration of Orion Expedition Cruises and Lindblad Expeditions has seen unprecedented bookings for the newly named and enhanced ship, to be launched Mar 2014.

In the first few weeks of general sales, a record number of deposits were taken for its first three South Pacific voyages.

"We are encouraging those planning to join one of our sailings in 2014 to book well ahead as accommodation options will be limited and expeditions will likely sell out early," chief operating officer of Orion Expedition Cruises Joel Katz said.

Sven-Olof Lindblad, founder and president of Lindblad Expeditions, is visiting Orion's North Sydney office this week, which serves as the base for Lindblad's new Australian operation.

"My main focus is to spend time with the team in the office and on the ship, to share our collective expertise and ensure a seamless incorporation of our resources and operations," he said.

Lindblad will also meet with key members of the travel industry in Sydney and Melbourne and attend preview events for past passengers.

The Sydney office is set to launch a marketing effort for the Galapagos, Peru and Upper Amazon itineraries, with a dedicated brochure to be produced this month.

National Geographic Orion will be newly equipped with sea exploration tools, snorkelling gear, a SCUBA program and an onboard National Geographic photographer on most departures.

Later this year, the ship is scheduled for dry dock, which will include technical maintenance and refurbishment of some public areas and guest cabins.

For the first time, dedicated staterooms for solo travellers will be set aside on all expeditions.

For details about the program and discounts, see www.orionexpeditions.com.

Expansion plans for ecruising

ONLINE cruise firm ecruising.travel is set for further expansion and diversification, with company founder Brett Dudley saying plans to widen business patterns were "advanced".

The addition of new senior members of staff including a new general manager and an expanded support team, along with expansion of its representation of tour operations in East Africa are among the keys to future growth.

Dudley however, remained coy on exact details of the company's immediate direction, however did elude to the possibility of the expansion of both its domestic & international operations in its core cruising businesses.

Ecruising.travel has doubled the size of its business since it was founded in 2000.

Scenic's Homes and Gardens

CHANNEL Seven home and lifestyle program *Better Homes & Gardens* has partnered with Scenic Tours, and will feature heavily in a three part episode series beginning this Fri 24 May.

In the series, the BH&G team will travel on an 18-day London to Prague itinerary with Scenic Tours, visiting the Chelsea Flower Show before the cruise as part of a three-night London stay.

The remaining two episodes will screen later in the year and will see the team visiting Salzburg, famous as the central city featured in *The Sound of Music*.

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Cruise News & Views...

Peter Kollar - Training & Development Manager

Cruise Industry TV

CRUISE specialists often need to communicate various aspects of a cruise holiday to their clients, from the onboard experience, to the more technical issues of security, safety and the environment.

We are delighted to inform you that agents now have a new tool to use, it's called Cruise Industry TV!



Cruise Industry TV has been designed to showcase the many CLIA Member Lines as well as to explain regulations that are paramount to the cruise industry's operation. The content was originally designed for the US market, but now as part of our ongoing evolution to the CLIA global body, the content has been modified to make it more relevant to our region, resulting in a fantastic tool for you to use to present information to your clients.

The 3 best ways to use Cruise Industry TV is to show clients a visual representation to their enquiry, use as a training tool for yourself and add the link to your agency's Facebook page.

Cruise Industry TV is a YouTube channel (free subscription) and you can access it via our website, www.cruising.org.au, and click on the Cruise TV banner in the middle of our home page.

As we continue development of the site, we will add more and more content, so make it one of your 'favourites' and be sure you visit it from time to time.

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Ship refloated after grounding

UNDERWATER damage surveys will be conducted today on *MS Serenissima* in the Scottish port of Oban Bay after the 112-pax vessel ran aground earlier this week.

The ship was refloated yesterday at high tide after strong winds thwarted a first attempt.

Initial reports showed no damage to the ship above the water line, with no injuries reported among crew or passengers.

The vessel, originally built in 1960, is now owned and operated by Noble Caledonia and operating in Europe after undergoing a significant refurbishment earlier this year.

Bad press hits Carnival profits

HIGH profile problems involving *Carnival Triumph*, *Carnival Sunshine* & *Costa Concordia* have affected the bottom line of Carnival Cruises Corp, with the company revising its profit forecasts down for the second time.

Earlier this year, the company reissued projected share returns from \$2.20-\$2.40 per share down to \$1.80-\$2.10 each, with the latest revision now down to \$1.45-\$1.65 each.

The company is moving to arrest the image of the recent negative headlines by spending \$700m on fleet-wide upgrades (CW 18 Apr), however the company confirmed that cruise cancellation figures were higher than normal.

CDU conf speakers revealed

REGISTRATIONS are now open for the 2013 Cruise Down Under conference, which will be held from 11-13 Sep in Cairns.

Keynote speakers for the event have also been announced, with VP of port operations for Royal Caribbean Juan Trescastro joining Holland America & Seabourn excursions director Ellen Lynch and Orion Expeditions founder Sarina Bratton to address delegates.

The conference will include a number of plenary sessions, workshops and industry gatherings held discussing key issues such as itinerary development, pre/post cruise opportunities, berthing capacities and more.

For more details or to register attendance, visit www.cruisedownunder.com/conferences.

A taste of Japan comes to Princess Cruises

A NEW season of Japanese cruises served as a good enough reason to celebrate, with a special Japanese themed day held in the Sydney offices of Princess Cruises this week.

Staff in the company's local Customer Service Office all donned their kimonos and decorated the office in Japanese decorations, capping off the day with sushi for lunch.

Earlier this year, the company announced that its *Diamond Princess* will join sister ship *Sun Princess* next year, doubling capacity over a six month season from Apr to Oct.

In all, 42 departures ranging in duration from 7-9 days will be operated from three ports across the country, including Tokyo, Kobe and Otaru, near Sapporo, in what it claims is a first for the cruise industry (CW 31 Jan).

Princess Cruises' Australia commercial director Alan Stuart praised the initiative of the team and their decoration skills, saying the team all looked great in their kimonos.

"it's great to have a bit of fun to celebrate the many destinations we visit and the types of cruises we offer," Stuart said.



Taste of royalty for Canada/US

PRINCESS Cruises' soon-to-debut *Royal Princess* liner will operate 4-7 day sailings up the east coast of Canada and the US, departing from New York early next year, becoming the largest vessel sailing in the region.

The company has also confirmed *Regal Princess* - due into service next year - will offer Eastern Caribbean voyages late in 2014 after its debut season in the Mediterranean.

New cruises on sale by Louis

NINE new destinations around the Greek Islands and Turkey will be offered by Louis Cruises next year.

The formerly known Louis Coral will be rebadged as the *Louis Rhea* and will join the current *Louis Olympia* in operating three-, four- and seven-night itineraries to a number of ports around the region, with the season running from Mar 14 until Oct.

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Forty locals for cruise3sixty

A DELEGATION of 40 agents from Australia and New Zealand will head to Vancouver next month for the 2013 Cruise3Sixty conference and trade show.

The show, which takes place at the Vancouver Convention Centre from 19-23 Jun, offers a series of educational seminars conducted by cruise industry leaders as well as a two-day trade show for delegates to network.

Among the guest speakers will be CLIA president and ceo Christine Duffy.

Delegates will also be able to tour 10 cruise ships and attend a Specialty Cruise Showcase to learn more about the smaller, boutique vessels operating small-ship cruises.

"There are lots of lessons that can be learned from the US given it's a far more mature cruise market," CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said.

"The knowledge and experience gained from events such as cruise3sixty will help savvy agents to grow their cruise business here".

Century boosts fleet to seven

CENTURY Cruises has commenced operation on China's Yangtze River with its second new vessel launched this year - the *Century Legend*.

An identical sister-ship, the *Century Paragon*, started operations earlier this year (CW 02 Apr), with the two ships offering capacity for 398 guests and boosting the company's fleet to seven vessels.

Century Legend will operate three-night itineraries on the river between Chongqing and Yichang moving in a downstream direction, before returning on a four-night trip.

The vessel offers 196 staterooms, each with a private balcony, with two exterior elevators, seven level atrium, indoor swimming pool and 150-seat multi-lingual cinema.

American acquires Empress

THE American Queen Steamboat Company has purchased the *Empress of the North* from the US Maritime Administration, and will rename the vessel as the *American Empress*, launching seven night cruises on the Columbia & Snake Rivers in the North West next year.

Empress of the North previously operated on the same rivers under its former owner, Majestic America, before closing in 2008.

American Queen is represented in Australia by Cruise Office - book at (02) 9959 1300.

Explorer set to be relocated

ROYAL Caribbean's *Explorer of the Seas* will join sister ships *Enchantment of the Seas* and *Freedom of the Seas* between Nov 2014 until Jan 2015, becoming the third ship to operate voyages from Port Canaveral in Florida.

The move will see the brand new *Quantum of the Seas* replace *Explorer* in its home port of Bayonne, New Jersey from that point onward.

Walking in Shackleton's steps

CHIMU Adventures will operate a special Antarctica voyage on 24 Feb in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 1914 Polar Expedition by Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The journey will depart from Ushuaia in Argentina, operated by the *Sea Adventurer*, retracing the path on the 16-day expedition.

More information and places on the trip can be secured at www.chimuadventures.com.

Summer on Sale with HAL

HOLLAND America Line has launched a new "Summer on Sale" promotion ahead of the 2013/14 Australian summer cruising season, with discounted fares and onboard credits of up to US\$100 per stateroom - ph 1300 987 322.



NOW this sounds like a chore the whole family will want to do.

Carnival Cruise Lines is searching for the UK's "funnest" family to test out all of its onboard experiences, dining options, entertainment and cabin amenities before reporting back to the company with their feedback.

The company is seeking to ensure it is meeting the demands of families wishing to take cruise holidays and that its facilities are exceeding the necessary fun factors.

The successful family chosen will be put to work sampling a nine-day cruise in the Mediterranean aboard the refurbished *Carnival Sunshine* before transferring to the Caribbean to be put to work road-testing (pardon the pun) the *Carnival Breeze* sailing from Miami to the Bahamas.

Only UK-based families may apply but to learn more, applications are available to download on the Carnival Facebook page.

Addition to G's Amazon fleet

G ADVENTURES has launched a new purpose built vessel for its operations on the Amazon River in South America, with the company's newest vessel given the name of *Queen Violet*.

The addition of the 32-passenger vessel will allow the tour operator to increase capacity by 30% on its itineraries to the region.

All 16 cabins are outward facing to maximise wildlife viewing opportunities, with the ship also offering large open decks for wildlife talks to be conducted by on-board naturalists.

Queen Violet began sailing this month, and operates the nine-day Amazon Riverboat Adventure, which is priced from \$2499ppts and includes six nights aboard the vessel.

Brilliance unveils \$30m refurb

A SPECTACULAR aerial show in a renovated theatre and double the number of dining options are highlights of a major \$30 million refurbishment project completed recently on Royal Caribbean's *Brilliance of the Seas*.

The 2100-passenger ship has also improved wireless internet access and added flat-screen LCD televisions in all staterooms as well as an outdoor LED movie screen on the pool-deck.

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NHH loving the high seas aboard the QM2



TWO staff from New Horizons Holidays recently had the opportunity to spend three days aboard the *Queen Mary 2* luxury liner on a voyage from Adelaide to Fremantle.

The two staff joined a number of agents and cruise specialists for a taste of the white star service offerings onboard the ship for the three day sailing.

A number of activities were enjoyed during the days at sea, including fruit carving classes as well as a full tour of the ship's galleys.

New Horizons marketing executive Sarah Bignell is **pictured** second from right with reservations sales consultant Holly McLeod and the remainder of the group outside the Todd English Speciality Restaurant.

Hurtigruten plans anniversary

ELEVEN special anniversary voyages have been launched as part of 120th anniversary celebrations this year by Hurtigruten.

Highlights of the series will include the Lyngen Alps of Norway and exclusive visits to the town of Lyngenfjord, a town not normally visited, with special onboard concerts and tastes from original 1893 menus also offered.

Departures will run from 21 Jun until 02 Jul - the day Hurtigruten's first captain Richard With departed Trondheim on Norway's coast.

The series of cruises will kick off with *MS Midnatsol* departing Bergen on 21st June, with the last ship - the *MS Lofoten* leaving on 01 Jul.

Quantum to parade New York

NEW Royal Caribbean vessel *Quantum of the Seas* will feature in a float entered by the line in the 2013 Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City on 28 November.

A statement from the company said the float "will reflect the adventure and excitement of cruising on a Royal Caribbean ship".

Cruise industry appointments

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises has announced the promotion of Jason Liberty to the role of Chief Financial Officer, replacing the retiring Brian Rice, who will step down early next year.

MEANWHILE, Hapag Lloyd Kreuzfahrten has welcomed Karl Pojer to the role of chief executive of the cruise line, with Pojer moving into the role after 17 years with the company looking after other business divisions.

Astor Saver fares extended

DISCOUNTS of 25% off full fares aboard the soon-to-arrive *Astor* will be available until 30 Jun, with the sale extended in celebration of the release of the ship's new brochure.

The ship's operator, Cruise & Maritime Voyages has also launched an all-inclusive delegates package for companies wishing to hold their conferences onboard.

Cruises of 2-5 nights can be arranged, with free use of conference facilities and for more details, see www.cmvaustralia.com.

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PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710

Phone: 1300 799 220 Fax: 1300 799 221

Advertising and Marketing: Christie-Lee Lachance, Magda Herdzik and Lisa Martin
Email: advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper
Email: accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Part of the Travel Daily group of publications.

Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper
Editor: Louise Goldsbury

Production Editor: Matt Lennon
Contributors: Roderick Eime and Chantel Housler

Email: info@cruiseweekly.com.au



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