



Diamond's Aussie circumnavigation

Princess Cruises' superliner *Diamond Princess* will operate two full circumnavigation cruises of Australia as part of its 2014/15 deployment.

EACH of the two 28-night round-trips will depart Sydney, with the first on 18 Nov, 2014 and being repeated in Feb 2015, the largest Princess vessel to offer the trip.

As part of the voyages, the 2670-pax vessel will visit all Australian capital cities as well as Airlie Beach, Port Douglas, Bunbury, Albany and will also make a stop in Bali, with cabins on the voyage priced from \$4679ppts.

Princess Cruises commercial director Alan Stuart said Australians would be spoilt for choice during the 2014/15 season.

"This latest program reflects Princess

Cruises' position as the destination experts, featuring cruises from seven to 35 nights sailing to locations ranging from Tasmania to Tahiti and Thailand," Stuart said.

Diamond Princess will also sail six 12-night voyages from Sydney to Auckland as part of her 2014/15 down-under deployment, joining *Sun Princess*, *Dawn Princess*, *Sea Princess* and *Ocean Princess* in Australia during the season.

MEANWHILE, travel agents wishing to learn more about the 2014/15 Princess Cruises season can view a special webinar detailing highlights of the program as well as special launch discounts.

Two sessions will be held, with the first at 8am AEST on Wed 05 Jun, repeated at 10am on Thu 06 Jun. To register, click below:

Session 1 - <http://bit.ly/princessweb1>.

Session 2 - <http://bit.ly/princessweb2>.

Cruise Holidays new campaign

NEWLY launched home-based cruise specialist group Cruise Holidays has backed up its push for new members with the launch of a consumer advertising campaign extolling the virtues of using a cruise specialist.

Managing director Les Farrar said the campaign took a light-hearted approach to highlighting the benefits of booking through a cruise specialist.

The campaign includes print and electronic advertisements as well as direct mail pieces to Cruise Holidays agents' client databases, personalised with their own contact details.

The advertising also features the new-look Cruise Holidays logo.

Australia is the first of Cruise Holidays' international network to roll it out, with the North American parent company set to follow later this year.

Ecruising cleans up with RCCL

ONLINE cruise agent ecruising.travel has been awarded platinum, silver & bronze sales awards from Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines for outstanding results on Celebrity Cruises, Royal Caribbean & Azamara Club Cruises brands.

Company founder Brett Dudley congratulated his team, saying "April was our biggest month ever and I wasn't even in the country, it goes to show our new team and focus is netting great results, I'm very proud of them".

The firm set a record for the biggest single sales month on Celebrity Cruises, booking more than 450 people on the line during Apr.

The strong performance for Azamara in particular means ecruising is one of the top four local producers for the brand.

The company's cruise division is now managed by Aurora Walker, while Bertha Harvey also recently joined the team from Carnival Australia.

Drama aboard Phi Phi Ferry

RECOVERY efforts have commenced off Phuket's coast after the vessel that operates passenger transfer services to Phi Phi Island started taking on water in heavy seas yesterday, puncturing a hole in the hull.

The *Puean Foong II* had more than 100 tourists on board at the time, who were safely unloaded onto a vessel rendering assistance, with the damaged vessel towed back to Phuket for repairs.

Managing director for Friendship Sea Tour, who owns the boat, said the rear of the vessel started filling with water but did not sink entirely, with no injuries or deaths reported.

Jammed with cruise news

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

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Cruise News & Views...

Brett Jardine - General Manager

Shore Excursions

EVER wondered how cruise lines are able to showcase literally thousands of shore excursions all over the world at one time?

What appears to be very easy on the surface is in fact a complex supply chain with several layers of involvement to ensure maximum enjoyment for the cruise passenger.

In each cruise region, cruise lines appoint an Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) to put together a series of shore excursions that can appeal to a wide audience.

Walking tours, wilderness and wildlife, sport and recreation, entertainment and culture, wine and food and soft adventure tours are all examples of the sort of shore excursions cruise lines look to offer passengers in each port.

It is the role of the ITO to then effectively act as the cruise lines travel agent by working with local suppliers. They are the destination experts in putting together shore excursion options that are designed to appeal and deliver good value.

For a supplier to be included in a shore excursion program, consideration is given to accessibility, distance from port, capacity to cater for groups, uniqueness, duration of the stop and above all the ability to be flexible on timing and numbers.

The cruise lines on board shore excursion manager who appears to know everything about everything (and often does) is actually liaising with the appointed ITO behind the scenes to ensure all ground operations run smoothly.

Passenger feedback from shore excursions is closely monitored by cruise lines to ensure future visits to particular ports continue to achieve a high level of guest satisfaction.

P&O boosts digital in new brochure

The 2013-15 program has been enhanced with smartphone and tablet technology and greater use of social media.

THE largest ever brochure produced by P&O Cruises is connecting its latest holiday program with its growing online presence.

On sale now, the 2013-15 brochure introduces interactive features that allow clients to discover the line's offerings via advancements such as QR codes.

One click of a smartphone or tablet takes users into P&O Cruises' Landlubbers or social media sites.

The company is now involved in Pinterest and Instagram, as well as its popular Facebook page, which has almost 200,000 likes, and Twitter.

P&O Cruises senior vice president Tammy Marshall said the new brochure reflected their strong social media presence and hoped to encourage passengers to share their holiday memories with @pocruises and to use "fun hashtags" such as #sailaway.

"It's becoming increasingly important to connect with past and future cruise passengers in a digital space," Marshall said.

"This brochure really bridges the two worlds for the first time and underscores how vital social media and smartphone technology is to our ongoing success."

Highlights of the 2013-15 program include cruises from every mainland state, the first roundtrip sailings from Adelaide, new itineraries to Indonesia from Fremantle, and new ports of call in Papua New Guinea.

Presented in a matte finish, the brochure has more than 300 departures from six different ports and an expanded itinerary index that spreads over two pages.

To connect, see pinterest.com/pocruises, instagram.com/pocruises, facebook.com/pocruises and twitter.com/pocruises.

Crystal savings for all

CRYSTAL Cruises has announced the return of the popular Bonus Share the Experience program on select 2013 and 2014 voyages.

Crystal Society Members and new clients will receive up to US\$400 shipboard credit for each "New-to-Crystal" passenger referred (maximum of four guests referred, per sponsor, per year) sailing on the same applicable voyage.

The sponsored New-to-Crystal guest will also receive up to US\$400 shipboard credits.

This offer applies to the selected 2013 and 2014 South Pacific/Asia voyages (4204-4208, 4302-4304) as well as the Mediterranean, South America, New England and Canada.

Agents can also book Crystal Society Members by 28 Jun 2013 for clients to receive an extra US\$500 discount in every category in addition to their regular member savings.

See www.wiltrans.com.au.

Carnival revamps excursions

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines Australia has this morning launched a revamped shore excursion page on its website.

The portal allows cruisers to scour information relating to all available in-port land excursions, with filters available to find the best options based on destination, price and desired experience.

Bookings can then be made via interactive menus on the stateroom television sets, with additional information able to be delivered directly to rooms, with tickets then able to be collected from the Shore Excursions Desk.

MEANWHILE staterooms are now open for sale in Polar for *Carnival Spirit* Australasian itineraries for departures in 2015.

Bookings for *Carnival Legend* will go on sale at the end of next month.

New Cruise3Sixty training

SIX new courses for travel agents will be launched at the upcoming cruise3sixty cruise industry conference in Vancouver.

Available tutorials will include extensive port, destination and itinerary education seminars as well as lessons in how to boost group sales and selling romantic cruises as a niche market.

Further, CLIA will unveil modules on how agents can maximise the benefits of being a member of the organisation.

Forty agents and representatives of the Australian cruise industry will attend the event, on between 19-23 Jun in the Canadian west coast city.

Venice Uniworld sail savings

UNIWORLD is offering a discount of up to \$1750 per person on its 13-day Splendours of Italy itinerary on selected sailings from Jun-Aug.

Discount-inclusive staterooms on the voyage are priced from \$5144pp - ph (02) 9028 5199.

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Thursday 30 May 2013



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Australia clearly a strong Champion at Sea

MORE than 1500 top selling cruise agents from around the world headed to Europe recently for the 2013 Costa Cruises "Champions at Sea" event.

The purpose of the occasion was to recognise and reward achievements of the best performing agents and stores selling staterooms on Costa Crociere vessels around the world.

This year, the event was held aboard the luxurious *Costa Mediterranea*, and **pictured** above centre

accepting a High Achievers Award on behalf of the team at Flight Centre Cruise is Rod Menzler, alongside Costa Asia vice president Budhy Bok and Costa Asia senior sales manager Julia Bales.



Silversea Galapagos land mix

SEVEN new combined land and cruise itineraries have been released by Silversea Expeditions in its late 2013 Galapagos program.

Itineraries feature cruises of between 3-4 days with pre- and post-cruise land touring programs have been designed for the South American region, combining to make holidays of between 8-11 days.

Cruise portions include a 4-day Baltra-to-San Cristóbal voyage or a 3-day return journey, travelling aboard the *Silver Galapagos*.

Six new voyages for Lindblad

EXPLORATION cruises to the Far North, the British Isles and South America are among six new voyages launched by Lindblad Expeditions.

The new journeys will be operated next year by the 148-pax *National Geographic Explorer*, complete with its strengthened hull for navigating the icy Arctic passages.

Destinations visited will include the Northwest Passage, Iceland and Greenland, while South American voyages will visit ports such as Buenos Aires and Brazil's Wild Coast.

British Isles itineraries seeing the vessel visit isolated islands in the UK chain, with a sailing also on offer visiting remote islands off the coast of Spain, Portugal and Cape Verde.

Prices start from \$12,370ppts and for more information, see www.expeditions.com.

Sunshine million \$ Makeover

CARNIVAL Sunshine has completed its first voyage following a \$155m renovation and refurbishment - a 12-day sailing from Venice.

The upgrade saw 182 staterooms added to the ship as well as new dining & entertainment facilities including a three-deck adults-only relaxation retreat with whirlpool & a waterfall.

Seven new bars were added, including an EA Sports bar screening live sports matches and offering sporting video game consoles.

Multiple entertainment options were added such as Hasbro, the Game Show, presented in a renovated lounge, and a new comedy club in partnership with star comedian George Lopez.

Bookings for *Carnival Sunshine* can be made through Travel the World on 1300 950 622.

Cruise shuttle to be continued

STRONG patronage during a trial period last year will see the Port of San Diego adopt The Big Bay Shuttle hop-on-hop-off shuttle service on a permanent seasonal basis.

The shuttle runs in a loop around a number of major hotels in the Embarcadero area, major inner-city tourist attractions and the cruise terminal, will operate until 02 Sep and costs \$3 per person per day.

Caribbean double upgrades

PASSENGERS booking before 31 Dec this year for Australasian sailings aboard *Voyager*, *Rhapsody* or *Radiance of the Seas* along with *Celebrity Solstice* and *Celebrity Century* can enjoy Earlybird upgrade deals including cabin upgrades priced from \$4 per person per day.

Other offers include Balcony Staterooms savings of up to \$500 if booked before 31 Dec.



NOBODY wants it.

A few months ago, *Cruise Weekly* reported on the Lyubov Orlova, a rusted former Russian cruise ship which had been found drifting aimlessly in the North Atlantic Ocean near Newfoundland in Canada, with nobody on board (*CW* 26 Feb).

Since then, no action has been taken, and no further sightings have been reported, leading many to believe she has simply taken on water and headed down to a watery grave.

Canadian authorities however have demanded the vessel's owner - Russian businessman Reza Shoeybi - take action to recover the vessel.

Despite this, unless a further sighting is reported, it is unlikely any action will be taken, leading to a sad end for the ship.

New Bentours brochure

BENTOURS has released its 2014 cruising brochure with a focus on river and coastal cruises in Scandinavia and the polar regions.

New additions to Bentours' portfolio include the Volga Explorer trip in Russia and Norway's Arctic Wonders.

The new Volga Explorer explores Moscow and St Petersburg, as well as ancient Russian villages, discovering palaces, monasteries, museums and countryside.

Ten-day tours start at AU\$1,544 ppts; 11-days, including a stop in Yaroslavl, is priced from AU\$1,715.

The new eight-day Arctic Wonders voyage along Norway's coastline visits Tromsø, to see the Northern Lights and ends with a night at the Snowhotel in Kirkenes, with prices starting at AU\$2,082 ppts.

The Bentours 2014 Cruising Brochure is available online at www.bit.ly/bentcruis.

Water damage on Breakaway

NORWEGIAN Cruise Lines has confirmed slight damage was caused to the exterior of its new, much-hyped *Norwegian Breakaway* while it was on its way back to New York City.

High winds in excess of 50-knots caused some of the balcony dividers to dislodge, but the damage was quickly repaired in port.



Face to Face: Ryan Taibel Director of Sales: P&O Cruises

Welcome to Face to Face, where we chat to cruise industry leaders.

How did you get into the cruise industry?

I have been fascinated with cruising since I was a kid. To be honest, I never thought it was a realistic career path. But an opportunity with Carnival Australia presented itself three years ago and I changed careers on a dime....the rest is history.

Where do you see P&O Cruises in five years?

I see P&O Cruises as the unparalleled market-leading cruise brand in the region.

What is the key to your success?

The fact that I am truly passionate about the product that I sell and the brand I represent.

How many cruises have you been on in the last five years?

I've lost count.

What was your most memorable moment on a cruise?

On my first cruise when I was a little kid, I finally figured out the crew DOES in fact sleep on the ship. I couldn't believe it!

What is the next "hot spot" in cruising destinations?

Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province. It offers picturesque beaches and rich WWII history. A gem of the South Pacific, which P&O Cruises will visit in October this year.

How can cruising continue to grow in the current financial climate?

How can it NOT continue to grow? You hear the catchphrase a lot but cruising represents amazing value for the holiday dollar. Regardless of the state of the economy, the cruise industry will continue to thrive.

What do you think is the most under-rated aspect of cruising?

The quality of food onboard is vastly underrated. Sceptical consumers envision high school cafeteria-style dining and the truth is anything but. Cruise lines today offer world class dining, a plethora of options and celebrity chefs at sea such as Luke Mangan's Salt Grill on P&O Cruises.

What is something you wish more agents or consumers knew about cruising?

I wish consumers realised that the fare paid to a travel agent is the same, if not less, than the fare paid direct to the cruise line. Believe it or not, many consumers – especially younger ones - assume that buying direct from the cruise line must be the cheaper option since travel agents make commission. Every consumer should be using a good travel agent for cruising, but some don't because they don't understand the value proposition.

What advice would you give other people who want a job like yours?

Good luck, I'm living the dream!



Ryan's Cruise Favourites!

Favourite Ship: Pacific Pearl

Favourite ship activity: Bingo (yes really)

Favourite shore excursion: Glass Bottom Boat

Favourite region: New Caledonia

Favourite port: Mare

Favourite onboard food: JW Black on the Rocks

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