



Voyages to Antiquity sales up 100%

Australians now accounts for 25% of passengers on the *MV Aegean Odyssey*.

DAVID Yellow, managing director of the UK-based Voyages to Antiquity, was in Sydney this week looking for answers to the company's skyrocketing success in the local market.

"Business is so good that I had to come over to find out why," he told *Cruise Weekly*.

"We're nearly 100% above last year, and it has the potential to be even bigger."

According to Yellow, the passenger mix in 2014 comprises 45% US/Canadian, 30% UK and 25% Australian, but he said the company's 'fly free' deal was only a partial factor for the strong international appeal.

"Fly-free certainly attracts people to look at the product, and about 50% of people book it, but 50% are not fly-free, so the product is establishing itself in its own right."

Completely rebuilt in 2010, the *Aegean Odyssey* had its capacity reduced from 570 to 380 passengers, and is set apart by unusual features such as its 28 large single cabins, included gratuities and complimentary shore

excursions on destination-intensive itineraries.

Pre- and post-cruise extensions are also included in the cost, with 2014-15 highlights including a three-day safari in Kenya and a five-day Golden Triangle tour in India staying in five-star hotels.

"There is very little extra that passengers have to pay – we don't rely on onboard spend to boost revenue," Yellow said.

"We focus on lectures, culture and history, so travel agents need to understand who to match to our ship," he added.

The latest programs, covering the Mediterranean, Africa and Asia, also include 30% new cruises and 16 maiden ports of call.

"Because we have 30-35% repeat passengers and lots of open-jaw itineraries, we need to keep coming up with more interesting, smaller ports and activities," Yellow said.

Free air, 20% discounts or 15% single supplements are on offer for early bookings on select sailings - www.voyagestoantiquity.com.

Major firms join industry expo

SEVERAL major players in the travel industry have signed up to the 2014 Travel Industry Expo, due to take place at the Royal Hall of Industries in Sydney from 18-19 Jul 2014.

In the last week, Jetstar, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand, Uniworld, Trafalgar, Adventure World, Creative Holidays, AAT Kings, Insight Vacations and Contiki have all joined the fray to exhibit their wares at the show.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

Rhapsody reposition change

ROYAL Caribbean International's *Rhapsody of the Seas* liner will reposition to Europe instead of Alaska at the end of its 2014/15 Australian season, resulting in two amended itineraries.

Guests booked on either the 16-night sailing from Sydney to Honolulu on 17 Apr 2015 or the 13-night Honolulu to Vancouver departure on 02 May 2015 can amend to similar voyages on sister-ship *Radiance of the Seas* or opt to receive a full refund.

The 2000-passenger *Rhapsody* will instead travel from Sydney to Istanbul to operate in the Mediterranean for the northern summer, with a 16-night voyage to Singapore, 14-night sector to Dubai and 15-night trip to Istanbul available as individual sectors or longer journeys of up to 45 days.

"These very exciting itineraries will offer Australians and New Zealanders a brand new route to Asia, the Middle East and Europe - it's the first time that Royal Caribbean International has operated such a route," RCL Cruises Ltd commercial director Asia Pacific Adam Armstrong said.

New Asian Trails river cruise

A NEW eight-day river cruise on the Mekong River from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh and on to Siem Reap has been launched for sale in the Australian market by Asian Trails.

The voyage sails on the 28-passenger vessel *Toum Tiou II*, with pricing for the voyage available from Asian Trails local rep Tourism Portfolio - visit www.tourismportfolio.com.au.

Bursting CW issue today!

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

Cruise ships and Bridges

WE ARE all very familiar with a certain bridge in Sydney Harbour that does not have sufficient clearance for many of our home ported & visiting ships to pass under.

Believe it or not, Sydney is not the only place in the world where engineers have given no foresight or consideration to our beloved ships!

The Port of Montreal last week announced that the local Canadian power company would raise two power lines above the St. Lawrence River, a move that will allow larger ships to reach Montreal.

The power lines were lower in height than the Laviolette Bridge in Trois-Rivières, currently the lowest obstacle on the St. Lawrence River for vessels sailing to Montreal. The Laviolette Bridge has just less than 52 metres of clearance under its structure - that is only slightly more than the Sydney Harbour Bridge at 49 metres!

By comparison, the Lions' Gate Bridge in Vancouver has a clearance of 61 meters, a height insufficient for Celebrity Cruises' *Solstice* class ships to fit under. However, the *Celebrity Solstice* is being equipped with a new telescoping mast so that she can call at Vancouver in 2014 instead of Nanaimo (Vancouver Island), where she did this year.

Did you know that the *Queen Mary 2* had to be built to a profile that allowed her to pass under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in New York, where the clearance is 70 metres? Fortunately with this build profile she is able to scrape under San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge where the clearance is 67 metres.

So what about Royal Caribbean's *Oasis* and *Allure of the Seas*? They have an air draft (height from the water) of 72 metres so would need to use their telescoping funnels to allow them to get under most bridges!

Worldwide Cruise Centres on the rise

On track to grow from 94 to 130 outlets, WWC is turning its focus to social media for 2014.

WORLDWIDE Cruise Centres is rapidly expanding its presence across Australia, with the network of travel agents set to further boost business through social media.

Managing director Fred Sparksman told **CW** it was crucial for more cruise sellers to learn to use social media to its full capacity.

"Social media is so important but not many

"We don't just promote our own product, we sell other wholesalers' products if we don't have it in our range, and we don't ask agents to switch-sell, because it should always be about what the client wants," he said.

Based on the enthusiasm of affiliates at the company's first conference at sea, held its earlier this month onboard *Voyager of the Seas*, he added "our recipe seems to be right".

At the conference, WWC ambassador and cricket legend Mark Taylor presented state and national sales awards to its leading agencies.

Winners included Judy Marbow's Cruise



agents understand the power of it," he said.

"At our recent conference at sea, we showed our affiliates how to use social media to spread their message to a very wide audience, we showed them what they can do for themselves for free," Sparksman said.

Additional social media workshops will be held next year for WWC affiliates, he added, with the network expected to grow from its current 94 outlets to 130 by Mar 2014.

Sparksman said the company was the Australian industry's "only true cruise broker".

Booking Centre (national); Jayes Travel (NSW); Cruise Consultants (Vic/Tas); Prestige Travel (SA); Grand Travel (WA); Cove Travel (Qld); Business and Leisure Travel, Cairns Qld (best promotional campaigns) and Allways Travel, Vic (best logo promotion).

Pictured are WWC's leading travel agent affiliates on *Voyager of the Seas*.

WWC will hold its next conference aboard *Rhapsody of the Seas* in Oct next year.

"We've already booked 100 cabins and expect to sell out quickly as the group continues to grow," Sparksman said.



AUCKLAND
HOP ON, HOP OFF
EXPLORER



The Auckland Hop On Hop Off Explorer bus stop is directly out front of the new Queens Wharf cruise ship terminal

Click here for more details

Tempo river cruise brochure

INDEPENDENT tour and FIT wholesaler Tempo Holidays has released a new brochure for Italy and Central Europe, which also includes its new range of European river cruises on Luftner Cruises ships (**CW** 29 Oct). New river cruises are priced from \$1,779pp for a seven-night Classical Rhine itinerary. A wide variety of itineraries, extensions and supporting accommodation is featured across the 114-page guide, with Italy, Austria, Germany, Malta, Netherlands & Switzerland included among many more - ph 1300 362 844.

Solstice launch birthday deals

ONBOARD credits of up to AU\$400 per stateroom have been released as part of a 5th birthday sale from Celebrity Cruises, with the offer valid on selected sailings. The deals are in celebration of the fifth anniversary of the christening of the *Celebrity Solstice*, which took place on 14 Nov 2008. On sale until 30 Nov, the maximum discount can be obtained by booking on any worldwide voyage operated by *Solstice* and departing from 01 Jan 2014 to Apr 2015, in an Oceanview category stateroom or higher.

Carnival's Long Lunch at Sea

GUESTS aboard *Carnival Spirit* and *Carnival Legend* will be able to take advantage of new dining offerings being rolled out by Carnival Cruise Lines ahead of the 2013/14 summer. Entitled "Long Lunch at Sea", the new epicurean experience is being touted by Carnival as a world first and will be available on sea days in the Nouveau Restaurant. The three-course gastronomic adventure will be priced from \$30 per person and has been designed in response to feedback from Australian guests seeking a daytime fine dining experience with quality ingredients.

Grilled cold water lobster, blue crab salads, duck breast and coconut flan will be available as part of the menu, with seafood platters on offer for an additional \$20 charge.

Additionally, light meals of prawns, mussels, fish n' chips, focaccias and burgers will be available at another dining enhancement to be introduced, dubbed "Freshie's Corner".

MEANWHILE, sea fare available on another Carnival Australia brand - P&O Cruises - can be viewed ahead of departure in a new 16-page food guide entitled *Fresh Thinking*, which forms part of the new P&O Cruises brochure.

More on this story in Tue's **Cruise Weekly**.

Business Development Manager QLD Holland America Line and Seabourn (12 month maternity leave cover)

For 140 years, Holland America Line has been a recognised leader in cruising, taking guests to exotic destinations around the world delivered in a gracious and elegant style. Holland America Line's fleet of 15 ships offers 500 cruises to 350 ports of call, visiting all seven continents. We have extended hospitality and world-class service to more than 11 million guests.

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Specific responsibilities include: promoting our premium and ultra luxury products and services through on-site sales calls, telephone/written communication, supporting the development of local marketing for agents, delivering sales presentations to target client groups, and conducting ship inspections with the focused goal of exceeding your target.

We seek applications from individuals comfortable selling award winning premium and ultra luxury products with 5+ years' 'on the road' sales experience who demonstrate:

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Ready to join Holland America Line and Seabourn for a once-in-a-lifetime experience? Apply online at careers.carnivalaustralia.com

Job Reference: CAR/1089274



Milestone for Anthem build

CONSTRUCTION of the second of Royal Caribbean International's new Quantum-class fleet of ships - *Anthem of the Seas* - has taken a giant leap forward with the ceremonial keel laying taking place overnight at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany.

An 620-tonne block measuring 18 x 23 metres was moved into the building dock by an 800-tonne crane to mark the physical commencement of the ship's assembly.

Anthem of the Seas is on track to debut in the 2015 northern spring, six months after that of sister-ship *Quantum of the Seas*.

MEANWHILE, Royal Caribbean has announced it has expanded its pre-purchased onboard drinks packages, with the new system in effect for departures from mid next month.

Four packages are now able to be purchased on US sailings of four nights or more, with only pax requiring the package needing to buy it.

Previously, all passengers in a stateroom were required to purchase the same package, even if not everybody wished to do so.

Packages are priced from US\$20pp per day through to \$65pp per day and progressively cover tea and coffee, non-alcoholic cocktails, bottled water, soft drinks, beer, wine & spirits depending on the package level purchased.

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SeaLink take possession of new catamaran

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises has launched its brand new \$2.6 million catamaran - named the *Elizabeth Cook* after the wife of company namesake Captain Cook himself.

Constructed in Tasmania, the 24-metre rocket vessel was first announced earlier this year (**CW** 30 Apr) and is the first new craft to join the Captain Cook Cruises fleet since the *MV Sydney 2000*.

Keeping with maritime tradition, the company's newest director & former Sydney Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull joined with local pastor Father Dooley to officially christen the new vessel by breaking a bottle of champagne over its bow.

Seating for 116 passengers is available on the lower of two decks, with expansive spaces for standing and 31 more seats located on a outside deck and the rear of the ferry.

The vessel's strong, sturdy design will enable operations in all parts of Sydney Harbour, including those previously inaccessible by other craft in the Captain Cook fleet.

Whale-watching cruises & sightseeing sailings around Sydney Harbour will be the vessel's main activities, as well as the daily hop-on-hop-off route which is now able to be expanded to include Manly and nearby inlets.



Charters and corporate events will also be able to utilise the new catamaran.

SeaLink Travel Group managing director Jeff Ellison expressed his delight at the cruising operator's fancy new harbour craft.

"We believe this is a prototype for the future. As well as being eco-friendly and cost efficient Elizabeth Cook offers a new level of comfort including large windows, a professional marine interior and a 360-degree viewing sundeck.

Pictured above in front of the new vessel from left is the SeaLink board of directors, consisting of Bill Spurr, Giuliano Ursini, Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO, Jeff Ellison, Anthony Haworth, Captain Cook Cruises general manager; Trevor Waller, SeaLink chief financial officer and Terry Dodd.

Cruising revival in Mazatlan

THREE major cruise lines have committed to visiting the Mexican port of Mazatlan in the 2013/14 winter season, heralding the port's first major cruise season in two years, with Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Lines and Azamara Club Cruises all scheduled to visit, bringing more than 18,100 passengers.



MORNING commuters passing by the Port Miami cruise ship terminal could have been forgiven for thinking they were hallucinating when they saw a trio of FIAT road vehicles powering up the river (**pictured** below).

The cars had been modified to turn them into high-powered watercraft, and they were accompanying the *MSC Divina*, which was completing its 18-day journey from Italy to begin its new life sailing from the US port.

Divina made a jaw-dropping entrance into its new Florida home, with MSC Cruises president and ceo Richard Sasso on hand to join local tourism dignitaries in a welcome.

In addition, carmaker FIAT itself sent a shiny new metallic red Rosso Brillante Fiat 500 on the ship for its journey over the Atlantic, in recognition of its own successful introduction of the brand to America.

MSC Cruises has relocated the *Divina* to operate to the Caribbean from Miami.

For an special YouTube video showcasing the arrival - and the awesome high-powered FIAT cars on the water - **CLICK HERE**.



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