



Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise stories from Australia and around the world.

Polar online fee glitch

P&O Cruises is advising agents it expects to soon rectify a minor glitch in its Polar booking system which is incorrectly increasing deposit amounts, even if paid.

The line says it believes that only a small number of bookings made prior to 19 Aug which had been amended in the past week have been affected by the IT issue.

Clients are not expected to pay additional amounts indicated, with outstanding amounts to be returned to pre-confirmed levels.

Agents can contact customer service for any further assistance.

Quantum, the 'smartship'

ROBOT bartenders, lightning-fast internet, 10-minute check-in, luggage tracking on an app, wristbands replacing room keycards – these are just some of the truly ground-breaking technological advancements on *Quantum of the Seas*, revealed for the first time at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany.

Dubbed the "SmartShip", Royal Caribbean's new Quantum class of ship aims to eliminate the most annoying aspects of cruising with new high-tech solutions.

Starting with the at-home check-in process, passengers will no longer have to wait in queue at the cruise terminal.

"There's no check-in when they get to the pier, they do it all at home, and they can even upload a selfie to use as their security photo, so you get from the sidewalk to ship in less than ten minutes," RCCL ceo Richard Fain told *Cruise Weekly* in Papenburg.

Fain declared the overhauled internet system would be six times faster, operating with unprecedented bandwidth using satellites launched by partner O3b Networks.

With speeds that match fast broadband connections on land, guests will be able to use Skype, FaceTime, watch streaming video and share images on social media.

"*Quantum* will have literally hundreds of times more bandwidth, and guests will pay less for it," Fain said.

New RFID 'WOWband' wristbands will require only a simple tap to quickly navigate the ship, make onboard purchases and open cabin doors.

Other uses of smartphone apps include 'Cruise Planner', enabling pax to organise (and change) restaurant reservations, shore excursions and spa appointments, and 'Royal iQ,' with a calendar of their daily schedule, and phone and text capabilities.

The company also announced it would provide all shipboard employees across the Royal Caribbean fleet with a Microsoft Windows tablet – a total of 40,000 free tablets for crew members.

Drawing the most curiosity, the newly announced Bionic Bar will have single-arm robot bartenders mixing cocktails, while other robotic machines perform shows in the three-deck Two70 theatre where floor-to-ceiling windows turn into projector screens.

The 4,180-pax, 167,800 GRT, 18-deck Quantum Class ship will be the world's most energy efficient cruise ship, with efficient hull configuration and engine design, no incandescent bulbs, and motion sensors to dim hallway lighting when nobody is present.

Quantum of the Seas leaves the shipyard at the end of Oct and will sail out of New York for an inaugural season before departing to a new homeport of Shanghai (Baoshan) in China six months later.

Qld Govt backs away on GC cruise terminal

PRESSURE from Gold Coast City Councillors, MPs and the public has resulted in the Queensland Government withdrawing its support for a proposed Chinese-led cruise terminal at The Spit.

The government said it would not allow state-owned land to be developed into a cruise terminal.

A recent Galaxy Poll found support was waning for Premier Campbell Newman's government, with 62% of respondents saying he didn't listen to public concerns.

"We have heard their views and acted on them," Qld Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney commented.

"The very clear message from all Gold Coast MPs is that the community does not support the development of Doug Jennings Park and wants The Spit retained as a recreational area," he added.

Following the declaration, development firm ASF Consortium has amended its plans, relocating the cruise ship terminal from The Spit to nearby Wave Break Island.



Cruise Calendar

The *Cruise Weekly* cruise calendar details upcoming port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	28 Aug
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	29 Aug
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	31 Aug
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	01 Sep
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	30 Aug
AUCKLAND	
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	27 Aug

New faces at Lindblad

LINDBLAD Expeditions has further expanded its local team with two new appointments.

Lisa Pagotto has been hired as the company's new strategic partnerships manager, alongside Christine Gardiner as business development manager.

Both bring more than 10 years industry experience to their roles.

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NOW this is a shore excursion.

Passengers travelling aboard MSC Cruises on its 20-night Grand Voyage from Hamburg to Buenos Aires will have the chance to sign up to compete in a fully-fledged marathon race.

MSC *Magnifica* just happens to have scheduled a visit to the Canary Islands port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife on the same day as the inaugural Tenerife marathon.

Passengers can take on an 8km course, with the start line only a short distance from where the ship will tie up, while the more experienced runners can take on either the 21km half-marathon or the full 42km marathon.

The visit on 16 Nov will come 12 days after the ship leaves Hamburg, first visiting Le Havre, Southampton and Lisbon before reaching the Canary Islands.

Afterwards, the ship will visit Recife, Salvador de Bahia and Rio de Janeiro before arriving at its final port in Buenos Aires.

Cabin prices for the voyage start at \$1,819pp twin share.

SinglesCruise.com to Aus

AMERICAN agency group Travel Leaders - parent company of Cruise Holidays - will introduce a third of its brands operating in the US - SinglesCruise.com - into the Australian market, **Cruise Weekly** can exclusively reveal.

SinglesCruise.com hosts regular groups of single travellers on socialising cruises in the US and will run its first Australian sailing on *Carnival Spirit* in Nov 2015.

All bookings for the local sailing will be managed by the Australian office upon its establishment.

The inaugural Australian voyage will be hosted by an experienced SinglesCruise host, however locally-based guides will be trained up for future departures.

Travel Leaders currently already operates the branded Cruise Holidays and host agency model Your Travel Centre in Australia.

Cruise Holidays' first Australian master franchisee and managing director of Your Travel & Cruise, Les Farrar told **CW** the building of the future was growing brighter for Travel Leaders's trio of brands.

"All have great potential with

tremendous technology and systems to back them up. Our challenge now is to grow these into strong businesses in their own right."

The expansion of Travel Leaders in Australia follows the move to incorporate Cruise Holidays USA into Vacation.com (**TD** 18 Aug).

Farrar says no discernible change to the way Cruise Holidays operates in Australia is expected following the integration.

"The decision is designed primarily to consolidate back office functions and improve supplier relations.

"Our own supplier relationships are very much locally driven and this will continue to be the case.

"It makes sense to work closely with our partners here wherever possible," Farrar added.

Life of Cunard concert

TWO special concerts retelling the formation and life story of Cunard Line will be performed in Liverpool, UK next year to mark the line's 175th anniversary.

The concerts will take place at the Anglican Cathedral at 11am & 4pm, both on 04 Jul 2015 which is the line's exact birthday.

It will mark the inaugural sailing from Liverpool to North America by its first ship, *RMS Britannia*.

Passengers aboard the special celebratory Trans-Atlantic crossing aboard *Queen Mary 2* will be in attendance at the show.

A limited number of tickets will be made available to the public.

QM2 will then depart to a mass of fanfare on a recreation of the first voyage back to New York, via Halifax, Nova Scotia and Boston.

New vessel for Quark

POLAR exploration firm Quark Expeditions has announced it will completely refurbish and launch a third vessel to its Antarctic fleet in time for the 2015/16 season.

The 199-pax *Ocean Endeavour* will undergo a major overhaul prior to operating 12 voyages in Antarctica, the Falkland Islands & South Georgia from Nov 2015.

Ocean Endeavour will replace the *Sea Spirit* for the season and will adopt a health and wellbeing focus, with passengers to partake in healthy meals as well as yoga & stretch classes and massages.

Activities offered on the ship will incl stand-up paddleboarding, the first Antarctic liner to offer the optional activity.

Demand for Myanmar

APT says pax demand for Burma had "exceeded expectations" in its first year, which led to the company's move to introduce its own river ships in the country.

The firm will launch two new ships for APT and Travelmarvel, known as *RV Samatha* and the *RV Princess Panhwar* from Jan 2016.

Regent connects pax

FREE onboard internet access will be available to passengers in most cabin categories on Regent Seven Seas Cruises from 01 Jan, the line has announced.

Unlimited access will be offered to pax in Master, Grand, Seven Seas, Horizon, Mariner, Navigator and Voyager suites, or roughly around two thirds of categories.

Pax in Penthouse and Concierge grade suites will receive internet packages of 200 or 500 minutes depending on the voyage length.

Shipyard to be sold

ANTITRUST authorities are currently reviewing a proposal by German shipbuilding yard Meyer Werft & the Finland Government to jointly purchase STX Finland from its South Korean owners.

Under the proposal, Meyer Werft will take a 70% stake in the STX Finland yard in Turku, with the government to take 30%, with the facility to be renamed as the Meyer Turku Shipyard.

Eat local on Princess

REGIONAL menus will debut on Princess Cruises vessel *Regal Princess* once the ship begins sailing from Florida later this year.

Produce including fruits, seafood and vegetables will be sourced from local suppliers for menus to reflect the destinations the ship visits throughout the year.

The concept will be rolled out to the rest of the Princess fleet over coming months, with tastes of Alaska, the Mediterranean and Hawaii to be introduced.

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