

Tweet to Cruise3sixty

AUSTRALIA'S biggest cruise industry trade show - Cruise3Sixty - takes place tomorrow in Sydney, but despite being completely sold out, you can keep track of events and the latest updates from the event using the official Twitter hashtag of #C3600Z

Don't miss next week's **Travel Daily Cruise Update** for extensive coverage from the day's events.

Allure-ing RCI promo

ROYAL Caribbean Int'l has launched a travel agent incentive to win a seven-night Caribbean sailing aboard the world's biggest cruise ship - *Allure of the Seas*.

To enter, sell any available departure on *Allure* itself, sister-ship *Oasis of the Seas* or the *Freedom of the Seas* to be in the running to win the major prize.

As an added promotion, RCI is offering free cabin upgrades and up to US\$300 onboard credit on any 7-night Caribbean cruise departing from 01 Mar to 31 Aug, if booked before the end of Feb.

MEANWHILE, *Allure of the Seas* will be repositioned to the Europe market for the northern summer season in 2015.

It marks the first time the vessel has operated cruises outside of its long-term Florida homeport.

Allure will be based in Barcelona from 03 May 2015 until Oct & will sail seven night cruises, visiting France, Italy and Spain.

Cruise experts shortage

A LACK of travel agents with specialised knowledge and experience of cruising is holding back growth, according to Phil Hoffmann Travel chief executive officer Peter Williams.

"Cruise is our fastest growing segment and if I could get more skilled staff, it would grow even further," Williams told **TD Cruise Update**.

"Broader travel consultants can learn quickly on the job but to sell cruise, you really need to go on cruises and take the time for training."

Further, the new urgent demand is for agents with expertise in river cruising, which is "surprisingly dominating for 2015," Williams added.

The earlier-than-ever release of preview brochures "by all the heavies" is expected to sell an unprecedented 30% of inventory, he added.

"APT jumped the gun, they were first out, so we have organised

groups for 16 departures in Europe and we'll have no problems selling them out," Williams said.

"There's such huge word-of-mouth with repeat passengers and referrals, and then we have people on their second and third river experience who are booking Rhine and Rhone combinations and the Duoro."

Williams said PHT was also investing in "off the beaten track" destinations, such as river cruises in India and Myanmar, as well as ocean cruising in Scandinavia.

"Eight years ago we had one dedicated cruise consultant; today the Glenelg office has 14 and the other eight branches have 2-4 each, but we need more specialists to keep up with the number of boomers who love cruising and are willing and able to explore," he said.

ACL newbuild rivers

AMERICAN Cruise Lines has announced it will deploy the first of its four new riverboats on the Mississippi River to join its *Queen of the Mississippi* vessel.

The second will be positioned on the Columbia and Snake Rivers in the Pacific northwest, operating alongside the *Queen of the West*.

Teachers on Un-Cruise

EXPERTS in subjects including music, wine, marine biology, photography and more will run a series of seminars, workshops and tutorials as part of seven themed Un-Cruise Adventures voyages in the 2014 summer - for info, email sales@un-cruise.com.

New virtual balconies

ROYAL Caribbean's *Navigator of the Seas* has emerged from a month-long drydock renovation which has seen the installation of 81 virtual balconies.

The feature sees a live feed from cameras positioned on the side of the ship broadcast on a wall-size screen inside the windowless interior staterooms - an idea pioneered by Disney Cruise Lines several years ago.

Navigator's other new additions include Panoramic Ocean View cabins offering floor-to-ceiling glass walls, eight new eateries and a FlowRider surfing simulator.

Culture on Azamara

SMALL-SHIP luxury cruise line Azamara Club Cruises has released details on its lineup of AzAmazing Evenings for 2014, free for passengers to experience.

The concept sees the line host a special cultural celebration once each voyage, with the aim of immersing passengers in the colours & flavours of a destination.

Events will feature a D-Day Liberation party on the beaches of Normandy in honour of the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Allied landings during WWII.

Other events include an Egyptian Moul in Safaga involving ritual dancing and chanting, a samba show in Rio de Janeiro and a performance in an ancient Roman Odeon theatre in Ephesus.



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CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
 GM, CLIA Australasia

Awards Preview

LAST week's column focused on recognition and the voting process for the Cruise Agency & Cruise Consultant of the Year awards to be presented at this week's Cruise Industry Awards.

Other categories that will be acknowledged include the Agency Promotion of the Year (AU & NZ), the hotly contested Network Promotion of the Year, the Rising Star Award (AU & NZ) as well as the inaugural CLIA Hall of Fame Award.

Looking at the Cruise Promotion categories, it is not unreasonable to suggest that 100% of CLIA Member Agents could win this award with a little effort! All you need is an idea and sometimes such an idea can evolve from something very simple.

From here you need a good dose of enthusiasm to see your idea come to fruition followed by a small investment in time to share your idea and success with our judging panel!

When we are looking for a Rising Star, the guidelines are quite simple. We are looking for an individual that has been employed in the industry for less than 3 years who is committed to learning as much as they can about cruise.

For owners and managers looking to encourage younger team members, aiming for this award is a worthwhile target and it is no surprise that some past winners have gone on to be recognised in the Consultant of the Year category.

Good luck to all the finalists!



City Ambassadors return

CITY of Sydney Ambassadors have returned to the city's cruise ship terminals this month for what is being termed "Super February".

A record 90,000 passengers are expected to arrive on nearly 40 cruise ships over the course of the month on a variety of liners.

The Ambassadors have again been positioned at Circular Quay's Overseas Passenger Terminal and two White Bay wharves, carrying maps, advice and information on restaurants, parks and attractions for help visitors find their way.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the team of volunteers were a great group of people who take pride in showing off the best of the city.

"This successful ambassador program is in its third year and is a joint initiative with Destination NSW and Sydney Ports.

"The program has proven so popular, we are now taking bookings from cruise operators who want personalised welcomes aboard their ships before passengers disembark," she said.

On the schedule to arrive in Feb

Wave highlights Aus

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand have been ranked fourth in a list of the most popular cruising destinations among US travellers as surveyed by OTA giant Expedia.

The firm's Annual Wave analysis surveyed 6,867 respondents who have cruised at least once, with only the Eastern Med, Alaska and the Western Med ahead of Australia and New Zealand.

One third of respondents said the available ports of call was the top consideration when making a cruise booking, with pricing as the second point of evaluation.

Expedia's study found cruisers were generally repeat clients, with the average respondent having taken at least four cruises.

More than half rated the ability to visit multiple places in one trip as the best features of a cruise.

will be the *Queen Mary*, *Costa Deliziosa*, *Radiance of the Seas*, *Arcadia*, *MS Oosterdam*, with *Queen Elizabeth* due on 01 Mar.

A combined total of 14,500 people are expected from those six ships, injecting millions of tourist dollars to local businesses and the wider economy.

"We want our visitors to have an enjoyable Sydney experience that they will take home and share with their friends," Moore added.

Signatures from MSC

MSC Cruises has designed a host of new Signature Series combined air & cruise packages for the 2104/15 season.

The latest range also offers passengers the flexibility of being able to delay the return flight if so desired in order to extend their European holiday.

A highlighted package is a 28-night Glacier & Mediterranean Magic itinerary, which sees pax depart Australia for Hamburg on 29 Aug 2014, heading home from Milan at the end of the holiday.

This offer includes a cruise on the *MSC Poesia*, visiting a range of ports in northern Europe and priced from \$7,041ppts.

The entire range includes air/cruise packages taking in Europe, the Americas, Caribbean and more - phone 1300 028 502.

Crystal jettisons BKK

SIX upcoming visits to Bangkok through to 05 Jan next year have been cancelled by Crystal Cruises as a result of recent government protests in the Thai capital.

An official travel alert issued by the US Government has also contributed to Crystal's decision.

Scheduled visits to Koh Samui and Phuket in coming months by both of the line's ships will not be impacted and will run as normal.

Crystal Cruises said the decision was made out of concern for the safety of passengers and crew.

Take Sweetie to Tahiti

PAUL Gauguin Cruises is offering an exclusive Valentine's Day gift package for passengers on all 2014 departures if booked by 15 Feb.

The bonuses include a US\$200 credit at the onboard spa on either of the line's two vessels, a box of chocolates and a bottle of sparkling wine.

Details at www.pgcruires.com.

Concordia diver dies

A SPANISH salvage diver working on the *Costa Concordia* has died after severely gashing his leg while working underwater.

The diver was helping to prepare the wreck for its eventual towing before deeply cutting his leg on an underwater sheet of metal and bleeding to death, according to Tuscan newspaper *Lanazione*.

PRINCESS CRUISES

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Princess ready for Capt Stubing



PRINCESS Cruises has taken delivery of *The Love Boat* Captain Merrill Stubing's hat ahead of the arrival of the legendary actor.

Actor Gavin MacLeod - famous for his role as the Captain in the hit 1970s sitcom - touched down this morning from Los Angeles, with his first stop being a visit to the Princess Cruises offices.

The 82-year old will also serve as a celebrity guest at Cruise3sixty Australasia on Fri as well as aboard the *Sun Princess* for a special vow renewal service before sailing to New Zealand for a similar commitment.

Ahead of Valentine's Day, The Love Boat star has also imparted some of his wisdom for modern-day Casanovas to help them woo the woman of their dreams.

From a man who said he has "been there - and done that", Stubing's tips include never to underestimate the power of a man in uniform and to be wary of the risk that mobile phones play in the path of finding romance.

The Captain also endorsed the luring power of good dancing, praised blokes man enough to embrace "chick lit" and heralded the appeal of a man able to hold their own in the kitchen.

Pictured above giving Captain Stubing's hat a quick test run is Princess Cruises vice president for Australia and New Zealand Stuart Allison and public relations manager Meg Koffel.

Walk against cancer

HOLLAND America Line will hold a series of "On Deck for a Cause" events across its fleet of global in support of World Cancer Day and the ongoing fight to raise awareness and raise funds.

Passengers and crew will be able to join a non-competitive 5km walk around the decks of each of its 15 ships worldwide.

Funds raised via contributions to the Holland America Line Foundation will go to a number of global cancer charities.

New Asian adventures

CRYSTAL Cruises has unveiled a collection of more than three dozen new shore excursions for its 204 Asian voyages.

The new range take in a variety of activities both in rural parts as well as major urban cities in Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Japan, China and more.

Activities on offer will include visits to the Sultan of Brunei's palace, along with other homes and villages.

Guests will also be able to trek in the Kinabalu National Park in Malaysia, design fabrics at a textile factory in Okinawa, learn traditional shodo handwriting in Tokyo, explore ancient ruins in Surabaya and much more.

The line will double its presence in Asia throughout 2014, with 14 voyages available from Feb until the end of the northern spring aboard its two vessels *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony*.

Cruise visas on arrival

TAIWAN'S Tourism Bureau has earmarked a plan to issue tourist visas on arrival to cruise ship pax in a bid to boost tourism revenue, with a new system to be gradually rolled out to more nationalities.

Last year saw 373 visits by cruise ships - a new national record, with estimates for 412 in 2014.

Space on SeaDream II

CABINS are still available for a 13-day sailing from Hong Kong to Singapore aboard *SeaDream II*, SeaDream Yacht Club has advised.

The cruise departs on 15 Mar & also visits Vietnam, Malaysia - phone 1800 217 902 for details.

Sale cut-off extended

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises has extended the booking deadline for its Earlybird Savings offer until the end of the month.

Savings of up to \$1,000 per couple remain available on select 2014 itineraries in Europe, Cambodia, Vietnam and China for bookings deposited by 28 Feb.

Available itineraries include the 11-day Highlights of China and the Yangtze, travelling Shanghai to Beijing through to the 29-day Grand European Voyage which sails from Amsterdam to Istanbul. Phone 1300 780 231 for details.



IF YOU'RE going to go out, you might as well go out in style.

A Turkish ferry destined for the scrap heap has made a final impact ahead of its demolition, by making a high-speed landing on the shore and scraping to a stop alongside two other ships.

The *MS Pride of Calais* was owned by P&O Ferries and operated the Dover to Calais cross-channel route for more than 25 years before operating the Ramsgate to Ostend service as the *MS Ostend Spirit*.

The ferry's dramatic final approach to the ship wrecking yard in Aliaga, Turkey, was sensationally captured on film and has now gone viral.

Since the impactful "landing", the ship has since been taken apart and sold for scrap metal.

CLICK HERE to view the video.

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