

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 27 Nov 2014



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Peter Kollar
CLIA Australasia

L'Sexy dreamboat

IT IS not often you can walk around a vessel thinking that you own it - but this was the case when I boarded Ponant's *L'Austral* last week in Hong Kong.

My dreams of owning it had less to do with ego and more to do with the fact you feel like you don't have to share your experiences with hordes of passengers; it is so well designed.

More like a private yacht than a cruise ship, this very sexy, chic and modern expedition ship was balanced perfectly.

Intimate pockets of space entice you to flop and drop into your own world, but around the corner a small gathering of well-travelled cruisers surround a stylish bar - but not in a snobbish way; more in a celebration of shared experiences.

Imagine a minimalist French boutique hotel in which you can open the door and step out into the remotest parts of the world, and you have Ponant - and that is only the hardware.

The crew were happy, close and knew their roles well. Quite often their roles are intertwined as there is no 'passing the buck' here - with average crowds of 250 or less, your requests are dealt with immediately.

With so many cruise lines trying hard to differentiate from one another it is important an agent understands the differences. Ponant doesn't have to try hard to be different...it's in their DNA.



P&O turning up the music

NIGHTLIFE on P&O Cruises Australia is set to move outside the conventional lounges, bars & clubs, with the line to innovate its onboard entertainment offerings.

In line with the 'Like No Place on Earth' marketing tagline revealed earlier this year (**CW**

30 Sep), each ship will undergo a regeneration, with "dreamlike party nights" designed to appeal to new cruising markets.

P&O Cruises entertainment director Brett Annable has just returned from a scouting trip to the US, in which he was sourcing new interactive party technology to deliver to guests at sea.

"We're looking at how we can bring the latest mind-blowing technology from Las Vegas and Broadway to sea, which is very much in keeping with P&O Cruises' reputation for innovation."

Techniques being explored include special effects to make the crowd feel as though they are part of the performance.

Annable said he is aiming to ensure that the new offerings "will have the whole ship buzzing for our guests".

Indonesia port tussle

CELEBRITY Cruises has been forced to make some last-minute changes to a voyage aboard the *Celebrity Millennium*, with ports in Indonesia hastily dropped due to a dispute with port authorities.

According to a statement from the line, Celebrity said that "a dispute has arisen with local Indonesian authorities of a nature that we believe puts our legal and ethical standards at serious risk".

The dispute had reached a level where Indonesian port officials were reportedly threatening to prevent guests disembarking or restricting the ship departing.

Celebrity added that the issue had been escalated to a national government level, but a solution was not expected until after the dates of the scheduled visits.

As a result, the line axed Bali & Komodo from the current sailing.

Guests who had paid for shore excursions were reimbursed with an onboard credit of equal value.

Millennium is currently on a 14-night voyage from Singapore, also visiting Thailand & Malaysia.

Today's issue of CW

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news & photos.

Asia Fund inductees

HAINAN and the Philippines have been admitted to the Asia Cruise Fund, a collective aimed at promoting regional cooperation in the Asian cruising sector.

A signing ceremony for the two new inductees took place last weekend at the Cruise Shipping Asia Pacific show in Hong Kong.

Vale Stanley McDonald

PRINCESS Cruises founder Stanley McDonald has passed away at the age of 94.

His passing comes three weeks after being honoured at the naming ceremony for *Regal Princess*, which also coincided with the line's 50th anniversary.

New land for Princess

BUSSELTON in Western Australia will make its debut on the Princess Cruises network today with the maiden call to the WA town of *Diamond Princess*.

The ship's arrival has had the town in a lather for days, with over 100 local volunteers eager to meet guests and show off the Margaret River region's highlights.

More than 700 passengers have signed up for a local highlights tour visiting a range of attractions including many famous wineries.



MOVEMBER will see multitudes of males growing mo's to raise funds for the Movember Foundation's programs and to encourage community awareness and support around men's health.

Amadeus IT Pacific men are putting out the challenge to the travel industry to raise funds for the cause. The person who raises the most money will win a **Shaving Brush Travel Kit**.

It's not too late to join - register at au.movember.com (add your company name after your name and choose to join the **Amadeus IT Pacific** team).

Email your before and after pics and progress updates to mocomp@traveldaily.com.au and we will showcase them on **Facebook** and in *Cruise Weekly*.

Get involved as an Amadeus Mo Bro! Click **HERE** to learn more about the program.

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WITH December just around the corner, people are starting to make their plans for New Year's Eve to ring in 2015.

Businesses and attractions are also promoting their party plans, including the original *Queen Mary*, which will host a global party onboard paying homage to its Scottish heritage.

Permanently moored in Long Beach Harbour in California, the "Auld Lane 'Shine'" party will reminisce about the music, culture and entertainment pax enjoyed onboard during its 1966 Mediterranean Cruise.

Different parts of the ship will be decorated in various themes based on Cannes, France; Cartagena, Spain; Mykonos, Greece; Alexandria, Egypt; Tangier, Morocco; Portofino, Italy and New York City, USA.

Each section will offer food and drinks themed on the area such as French can-can dances, sangria, pyramids and belly dancers, henna art, singing gondoliers and even a classic New York Rockettes countdown to the midnight fireworks.

Tickets range in price from US\$99 to \$199 for a VIP entry, with a variety of dining options.

Gem install favourites

POPULAR entertainment and dining venues O'Sheehan's Neighbourhood Bar & Grill and Sugarcane Mojito Bar have been added to *Norwegian Gem*, which sails year-round from New York.

The venues made their debut for the line on *Norwegian Epic*.

MEANWHILE, cruises on *Sirena*, the sixth & newest member of the Oceania Cruises fleet, will be opened for sale in Mar next year.

Norwegian Cruise Line yesterday announced a deal to buy the ship, formerly known as *Ocean Princess*, from Princess Cruises.

Coral launch agt incentive

SMALL-SHIP expedition cruise line Coral Princess Cruises has put over \$50k worth of staterooms up for grabs to the trade as part of its annual major agent incentive.

Launched earlier this week, the prize for the 2014 promotion is a stateroom on a voyage of the winner's choice up to 13 nights in length, aboard *Coral Princess*.

The winning agent may also bring their partners onboard for the prize, which is valued at a total of up to \$25,380.

Runner-up prizes of a 10-night sailing onboard either *Coral Princess* or *Oceanic Discoverer* is available to win, with a three, four or seven-night Great Barrier Reef sailing on *Coral Princess II* also to be offered to the agent finishing in third place.

New HAL for singles

STATEROOMS purpose built for families and singles will feature on Holland America Line's new ship *MS Koningsdam*, which will make its debut early in 2016.

Sleeping up to five in each, 32 family ocean-view staterooms will offer two bathrooms, with 12 solo cabins available on multiple decks.

MSC tech upgrades

POWERFUL new modems will be installed on all MSC Cruises ships as part of a fleet-wide tech optimisation which will result in significantly improved wi-fi speed.

The line has commenced the rollout across its 12 ships, with the new software and systems provided by satellite firm Marlink.

MSC says that once complete, passengers will enjoy internet speeds "comparable to terrestrial wireless broadband".

"Staying connected is increasingly important to our guests, so MSC Cruises wanted to enhance the onboard wi-fi experience by ensuring that more guests can get online at the same time," said MSC Cruises technical general manager Emilio La Scala.

Entries for the incentive, which went live this week, are earned with each new Coral Princess Cruises booking made by 01 Feb.

Bonus entries are awarded with bookings of the line's New Guinea Circle itineraries during the promotional period.

Like last year, there is no limit to the number of entries an agent can receive, with each booking earning a shot at the major prize.

The winner will be drawn at random from the eligible entries on 04 Feb, with the prize valid to take until 01 Feb 2016.

For more information on the promotion, **CLICK HERE**.

RCI Biggest Sale Ever!

THREE separate incentives are on sale for two months in what Royal Caribbean International says will be its "biggest sale ever".

From 30 Nov to 31 Jan, all local sailings will include 50% off companion fares, half price deposits and up to US\$400 credit.

The line's latest offer is valid on Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific, Trans-Pacific and Asia repositioning voyages departing from 01 Jan 2015 to 28 Apr 2016.

As an extension of the deal, overseas sailings will also include the offers if booked by 30 Dec, excluding *Quantum of the Seas*, *Anthem of the Seas* and voyages commencing from China.

Rising CLIA Masters visit Mexico



PRINCESS Cruises took its place among the list of lines to have hosted the CLIA Australasia Masters Conference, with the latest event taking place recently aboard the *Crown Princess*.

Taking part in the conference were 50 agents from Australia and New Zealand, who spent six nights in the Mexican Riviera.

For the 16th year in a row, US-based travel industry trainer, motivational speaker & business coach Scott Koepp served as the conference facilitator, imparting his expertise in how to successfully apply advanced sales and marketing techniques in promoting and selling cruise.

The cruise was not all work, with plenty of time in between

sessions to relax on the ship or visit Mazatlan or Cabo San Lucas.

Prior to the voyage, the group also spent two nights on another ship, whisked back to the classic days of cruising with two nights aboard the *Queen Mary*, moored in Long Beach Harbour, California.

In attendance, CLIA Australasia general manager Brett Jardine said the event was once again positively received by attendees.

"Every year the demand to attend increases and we've already had some fantastic feedback from this year's group saying the conference exceeded their expectations and that Scott lived up to his reputation as an exceptional facilitator," he said.

The group is **pictured** above.

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Top Hawaii agents head to sea



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's *Pride of America* was the home for this group of agents recently, enjoying a seven-day tour of the Hawaiian Islands during the 2014 Experience Aloha Famil.

Accompanied by Hawaii Tourism Oceania country manager Ashlee Galea, the group of 20 agents kicked back onboard, enjoying the 18 restaurants, nine bars and lounges and plethora of activities.

Representatives from Norwegian Cruise Line and Hawaiian Airlines, which flew the group to Hawaii, also took part in the exciting adventure.

A great way to see all of the Islands of Aloha, the 2,186-pax vessel sails each evening, with pax waking to a new port every day. Famil participants disembarked

every morning to enjoy a different shore excursion, including a day snorkelling off the coast in Kona.

Pride of America is based year-round in Hawaii, operating weekly departures from Oahu each Sat.

Galea is **pictured** back row far right with her 2014 famil group during their day on the Big Island, with the *Pride of America* looking on in the background.

Carnival closes Ibero

SPANISH line Ibero Cruises has been closed down by parent firm Carnival Corporation following the sale to an undisclosed buyer of *Grand Celebration* - the second of the line's final two ships.

Ibero Cruises also had the *Grand Holiday* in its fleet prior to selling it earlier this month to Cruise & Maritime Voyages (**CW** 04 Nov), where it will be rebranded as *Magellan*, to sail from the UK.

At the same time, *Grand Celebration* was moved to the fleet of Costa Crociere, however this vessel too has been divested.

The line was not promoted or widely sold in Australia and was a sister-line to AIDA Cruises, which is based in Germany.

Costa Crociere will shuffle its fleet ranks as a result, moving the *neoClassica* to service bookings for the *Grand Celebration* during the 2014/15 northern winter.



Brochure Spotlight

FRENCH

cruise line Ponant has unveiled the first brochure in market under its compacted name. The

guide covers voyages departing from Sep 2015 to Apr 2016 on five vessels - *L'Austral*, *Le Boreal*, *Le Soleal*, masted ship *Le Ponant* and its newest ship, *Le Lyrial*.

Ports on the schedule for the first time include Papua New Guinea, Hawaii, the Solomon Islands and French Polynesia.

Bonus value-add offers are in market, while solo travellers are catered with no supplements on a variety of voyages.

Straight up upon opening the brochure, cruises for the season are sorted by departure date rather than ship or region to assist with planning a voyage.

Brochures are on shelves now.



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Barge offers in spring

EUROPEAN Waterways has released a range of new special offers for the northern spring season, with 10% savings on cabin and full boat charter bookings.

Offers are available on select departures in France, Holland, the British Isles and more.

Highlighted itineraries include Mar and Apr departures on the 12-pax hotel barge *Panache* in Holland, visiting quaint towns such as Delft - ph 1800 828 050.

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