

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 09 Apr 2015

River, ocean combos

EVERGREEN Tours is offering a new Arctic Adventure which marries up an Emerald 'Star Ship' Europe river cruise with Poseidon Expeditions' 13-night cruise from Oslo to Reykjavik on *Sea Spirit*.

The one-off 29-day 'Best of the Arctic Adventure & Splendours of Europe Rive Cruise' departure features in Evergreen Tours' 2016 Europe Deluxe River Cruising & Tours brochure, leaving 16 Aug 2016 & priced from \$18,255ppts.

Other new seamless river cruise & ocean cruise combos offered in 2016 include a Mediterranean voyage between Rome & Athens and a Baltic Sea option operating round-trip from Copenhagen, both with Princess Cruises.

Earybird offers include Fly Free to Europe when booking a river cruise (based on Riviera Deck) by 31 Oct, and free cabin upgrades when booking river and ocean cruise combinations.

More from Evergreen on **page 4**.

Avalon fears pricing culture

AVALON Waterways managing director Australasia Stewart Williams has expressed concerns at river cruising falling into a culture of heavy discounting on the basis of sheer overcapacity.

Speaking to **CW** at the launch of the line's 2016 season, Williams said ever-growing competition in Australia and ballooning capacity

was leading to dangerous territory and desperation to fill cabins.

"Operators rely to a great extent on the Australian marketplace and they get worried that they've got inventory [so] they distress it and dump it on the market. It's not the way it should be done."

Williams added that sales for 2015 were currently down from a "record year" in 2014, but that numbers for 2015 departures were recovering week by week.

Avalon will expand its reach into Belgium next year, cruising the Meuse River as far as the town of Namur in one of two new itineraries kicking off next Apr.

Both beginning in Amsterdam, the eight and nine-day journeys visit cities such as Antwerp and Brussels, WWI Battlefields in the Flanders region and more, priced from \$2,990pp twin share.

A 267-page Avalon brochure is available now - more on **page 3**.

Lines back in Vanuatu

PORT Vila has been declared safe for cruise passengers to resume debarking in the Vanuatu capital following Cyclone Pam.

Guests on P&O Cruises' *Pacific Dawn* were the first to visit after the disaster, arriving yesterday, with *Pacific Pearl* docking on Sat.

In addition to guests, both ships delivered another shipment of aid including building materials.

Both vessels were greeted with a local band celebrating the return.

Olsen is the word

CORPORATE affairs specialist & former Carnival Australia director of corporate affairs Sandy Olsen has returned to the organisation after more than three years away.

In her new role of vice president corporate affairs from 01 Jun, Olsen will be the firm's voice in driving awareness of port facility requirements around Australia, with focus on Sydney & Brisbane.

She will also provide support to ceo Ann Sherry, whose role has also broadened to encompass the chairmanship of CLIA SE Asia.

"Sandy will support our efforts to achieve long term shared access at Garden Island in Sydney and improved cruise facilities in Brisbane to accommodate larger cruise ships," Sherry commented.

Today's issue of CW

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

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Fiji cruise pre-famils

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji and Blue Lagoon Cruises are both among a list of suppliers offering pre-famil itineraries to delegates attending Fiji Tourism Exchange, on in Denarau from 15-19 Jun.

Itineraries from the available list - **CLICK HERE** - offer guests the chance to enjoy a two-night CCC Fiji cruise as part of a five-night trip, while Blue Lagoon is offering a three-day Explorer Cruise.

Both itineraries also include a stay on land and local touring.

Carnival also test fees

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines is following the lead of Norwegian Cruise Line (**CW** 02 Apr) in testing its own room service fees system.

A new room service menu will be introduced, with some items costing between US\$4 and \$7, while many items remain free.

Carnival's trial is taking place on *Carnival Imagination*, *Carnival Conquest* and *Carnival Pride*.

P&O evolution continues

A MULTITUDE of new itineraries have been added by P&O Cruises as part of its 2016/17 program, with themed short break cruises making up an increasingly large component of the new season.

Released yesterday, the period from Oct 2016 - Jul 2017 features 191 departures in total across 38 itineraries, and marks the second season for the line following the addition of its two newest ships *Pacific Aria* and *Pacific Eden*.

Brisbane will have two ships based year-round, while *Pacific Aria* will operate a season from Sydney, which will include a 15-night Papua New Guinea trip, priced from \$1,899pp quad share.

PNG will also be visited on a separate 10-night voyage by *Pacific Eden* from Brisbane.

Ships will be based at different times in Melbourne, Adelaide and Auckland, which will see the line's first P&O SeaBreak departing from Auckland - a short jaunt

to Napier for pax to take in the popular Art Deco Weekend.

The SeaBreak range has been expanded to include 84 itineraries and niche sailings, including four music themed sailings.

Short break departures will be on offer from Adelaide onboard *Pacific Aria* including three night weekends and four night options to Port Lincoln and Melbourne.

Guests seeking a short cruise from the Vic capital can also be part of P&O maiden SeaBreak to the NSW coastal town of Eden, priced from \$599pp quad share.

P&O senior vp commercial operations Sture Myrmell praised the opportunities available.

"With the biggest home-ported fleet, we can offer the largest range of itineraries and destinations in the region."

The season goes on sale 22 Apr, with the first 200 guests also receiving priority check-in, a welcome gift and onboard credit.

Inquest rules suicide

WESTERN Australia's Coroners Court has concluded that the death of a man who jumped from Princess Cruises' *Sun Princess* in Sep 2013 was indeed a suicide.

An inquest into the death of Thomas Francis Levinge, who was 73 at the time, referred to CCTV showing Levinge climbing over the aft railing and jumping into the ocean in Prince Frederick Harbour in the Kimberley region.

Sun Princess left Fremantle 29 Sep 2013 en route to Sydney, with the incident occurring on 07 Oct.

The Coroner deemed Levinge knew the likely consequences of his actions, ruling that death occurred "by way of suicide".

Silversea adds flight

AIR and land packages are now available on Silversea expeditions in the Galapagos, with deals including roundtrip flights from Ecuador to meet the vessel, land tours, pre-cruise accom and more.

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Avalon toasts to the new season



AVALON Waterways last night hosted a wine tasting evening to formally launch its 2016 River Cruises brochure as the cornerstone of an exciting season.

The evening saw Avalon confirm two new Suite Ships to join its fleet in 2016 in *Avalon Passion* & *Avalon Imagery II* (CW 31 Mar).

Attendees sipped on samples of fine champagnes, Rieslings and Rosé offerings from regions

sailed by Avalon including France, Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

A selection of devilish Belgian chocolates from the Belle Fleur collection closed the occasion.

Pictured above from left is Avalon national marketing manager Adam Mussolum, managing director Australia Stewart Williams, national sales manager Peter Douglas and Brand Ambassador Deborah Hutton.

Disney health system

PARENTS on Disney Cruise Line can now select healthy menu options for their children after the line rolled out the "Mickey Check" system on its four vessels.

The Mickey Check stamp is applied to food items meeting Disney guidelines for calories, saturated fats, sodium and sugar, with a Mickey Check Kids Meal including three or more nutritious food groups with minimal sugar.

The system has been in place since 2006 at the entertainment giant's theme parks worldwide.

More information can be found at www.disneymickeycheck.com.

Pandaw into China

A NEW four-country river cruise has been launched by Pandaw River Expeditions for 2016 which will take pax into China.

The seven-night cruise will depart Chiang Saen in Thailand, cruising the Upper Mekong and into Jinghong, operating on the brand new 20-pax *Laos Pandawa*.



CRUISE lines are nothing if not adaptable to the interests of their travelling public.

Some of the more peculiar themed cruises scheduled for 2015 have been revealed, with a very broad scope of interests, hobbies and passions catered.

Themed cruises on offer aim to appeal to fans of psychic readings, ghost hunting, Star Trek, tattoo junkies, a cat lovers cruise, ballroom dancing, death metal, yoga, poker, gothicism, knitting, wine lovers, crime and investigation and many more.

For the more risqué minded, three Swingers cruises are on the table for 2015, ranging from ocean to river departures across a number of lines, while naturist cruises also remain popular, organisers report.

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Catch up with celebs

ROYAL Caribbean has uploaded last week's special presentation of *Tom, Rach & Rosso Go Cruising* for any viewers who missed the original broadcast on Channel 7.

The show features Tom Williams, Rachael Finch and Tim "Rosso" Ross getting their first taste of all things cruising aboard the line's *Voyager of the Seas* on a 10-night New Caledonia sailing, enjoying all the onboard activities.

CLICK HERE to watch the show.

Great Escape lounge

KIMBERLEY cruise operator The Great Escape Charter Company has opened a lounge facility for passengers to utilise either before or after a sailing.

The lounge was created using vacated office space adjacent to its headquarters in Broome and offers couches, armchairs, TV, free wi-fi, brochures of local attractions and reference library.

In addition, a stocked fridge with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks as well as an espresso machine is all available to guests between hotel checkout or flight departure/arrival and a cruise.

All Leisure closes US

ALL Leisure Group has confirmed the closure of its North America operation, with business in the region to now be serviced via a GSA arrangement through Discover the World.

All Leisure is the parent company of Voyages of Discovery, Swan Hellenic and Hebridean Island Cruises.

The Florida office has been in place for the last decade, with the business led by Steve Tucker, ex Silversea Cruises, who is leaving the company.

'Star Ships' meant to ply

TWELVE months after debuting Emerald 'Star Ships' on European rivers to rave reviews, Australian premium escorted tour company Evergreen Tours has released its new season product with an expanded range of cruising and bedded down pricing.

Evergreen Tours' fleet of Emerald ships have swollen to three, a fourth vessel will be handed over next month and a fifth launching in early 2016.

GM Angus Crichton says agents can bypass preview & pre-release Europe touring programs & bed down firm cruise and itinerary dates with Evergreen Tours.

"Agents want to know what's new for 2016 & with our brochure out now, they know all the details - there is no smoke and mirrors".

"All our touring is done. Unlike rivals, we've got land which others may not have until Sep or Oct.

"So agents don't have to say 'I'll put your name down and let you know'. With Evergreen they can go straight to the brochure and select a date for one of our traditional land tours."

Crichton admitted the touring range wasn't comprehensive, "but it is what sells out of the Australian market".

The new 182-passenger *Emerald Sun* and *Emerald Dawn* are sister ships to *Emerald Sky* and *Emerald Star*, and will go into service in coming weeks.

Crichton told **Cruise Weekly** that travel agents have embraced the Emerald 'five-star ship at four-star price' cruise product, which is owned by Scenic Tours managing director Glen Moroney.

He said those agents who took a punt on the brand in its first year



of operation were left thrilled. "2014 was extremely successful for the Emerald Star Ships. They were an unknown quantity with their innovative design, which to those agents that have come on board, has proven worth the risk.

"Having our own vessels was a gamble by our owner Glen Moroney," Crichton said.

"It was a big risk to put money into the brand for Evergreen Tours, and it has paid off," he said, adding that limited capacity remains on 2015 departures.

Crichton suggested that agents unfamiliar with the product could get up to speed by going to the company's landing page of evergreentours.com.au, which features a 360° virtual tour of the Star Ships, deck by deck.

The new ships are near carbon copies of their fleet mates, aside from minor cosmetic changes.

Subtle 'Star Ship' refinements include a new landing on the main stairs, while in-cabin mini-bars have been pulled out of the wardrobe and placed in drawers, opening up more hanging space.

An extra shelf in the bathroom & more space between twin beds have also been incorporated.

Crichton is **pictured** above (left) with Evergreen Tours Europe product mgr Andrew Kelleher.



CRUISE NEWS & VIEWS

with Brett Jardine
GM, CLIA Australasia

Fitness at Sea

CRUISE lines are making waves with their fitness facilities, spas and wellness programs that rival land-based hotels and resorts.

Whilst a number of cruise lines have claimed the largest, most elaborate (or best view) workout space at sea, the new benchmark in the fitness stakes is now markedly higher with some lines partnering with high-profile land-based fitness specialists.

This means guests can not only maintain their exercise routines whilst on board, they can also try out the latest fitness trends using the most advanced equipment.

Fitness classes have been a mainstay of cruising for many years - primarily to ease guilty consciences about those midnight dessert buffets! However today's classes at sea can keep even the most devoted fitness buff happy.

In many cases, cruise lines are introducing customised fitness programs that guests can undertake onboard (under the guidance of an instructor) then take ashore to continue at home.

Guests that are devoted to pilates and yoga will find plenty of options on cruise ships today and to top this off, the spas on board also continue to evolve, further highlighting the focus on health and well-being whilst cruising.

I just hope writing and reading about on board fitness is sufficient to keep those extra kilos away on my next cruise!



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