

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 10 Dec 2015

## Bahrain joins alliance

**BAHRAIN** is the latest jurisdiction to join the Cruise Arabia Alliance, which also has membership from Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Qatar and Oman.

The six member group encourages the sharing of best practices and aims to ensure a consistent region-wide high level of service and standards.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also confirmed it would complete the 2015/2016 cruise season with 68,000 passengers and 32 calls from various cruise lines.

## French flavours

**PREMIUM** French cuisine will be on offer on board Cunard's *Queen Mary 2*, with the launch of the new Verandah restaurant.

It is set to open in June after the ship's upcoming significant refit, exactly 80 years after the first Cunard Verandah Grill went to sea on *Queen Mary* in 1936.

Set within a light and elegant dining room, the seasonal French restaurant will replace the Todd English eatery.

## Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a full page from **Blue Lagoon Cruises** promoting its Sofitel Fiji and travel luggage bonus offer.

## SuperStar Virgo's maiden call

**THE** maiden call of *SuperStar Virgo* into Sydney Harbour yesterday was celebrated with a plaque exchange between Sydney Ports and the ship's captain.

The ship was last in Australia 12 years ago, and she's currently on a 46 night voyage from Hong Kong to Australia calling into various ports around the country before heading back to her home port of Hong Kong via Bali & Singapore.

During *Virgo's* maiden call into Sydney yesterday Star Cruises opened its doors for key partners

to explore the ship's facilities - such as bookable karaoke rooms - and experience Star Cruises culinary delights which include Chinese, Japanese and Halal-certified Indian eateries.

"With her maiden call into Sydney it's a proud moment for us all. We couldn't be happier to showcase her to our industry partners along with our new & existing guests," Brigita Devries of



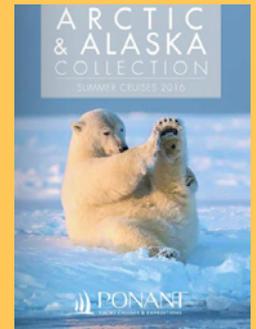
Star Cruises said.

"It was a great opportunity for our partners to be able to set foot on our beautiful ship in local waters and experience the warm hospitality that Star Cruises is renowned for along with the ship's amazing facilities," she said.

The official plaque exchange took place on the ship's bridge, with *SuperStar Virgo's* Captain Blomquist **pictured** accepting the precious memento from David Pratt of Sydney Ports.



## Ponant - Arctic cruising 2017



**FROM** Jul to Sep 2017 Ponant will undertake 15 voyages in the Arctic region with a selection of cruises ranging from 7 to 20 nights exploring Iceland, Greenland, Canada and Norway, including the famed North West Passage Loop itinerary.

Experience the Arctic's expansive landscapes, majestic glaciers, geysers and icebergs - regions famous for polar bears, Arctic foxes, caribou and grey wolves.

These expeditions provide the comfort and safety of a modern, well equipped ship specially designed for polar exploration.

Warm beds, warm food and even a warm swimming pool make modern day exploration a very pleasant experience.

For more information on the cruises see [www.ponant.com](http://www.ponant.com).

## Win with travelBulletin

Want to win a year's subscription to *travelBulletin*?

Just find the *travelBulletin* cover inside the pages of today's **Cruise Weekly** to WIN.

We don't want you to miss out - so we have increased the prizes for this last week.

The first 50 correct entries sent to [tb@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:tb@cruiseweekly.com.au) with the page number and your details will win.



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## New balconies for Celestyal

**CELESTYAL**  
Cruises has added 43 new balconies to its *Celestyal Crystal* (pictured) as part of an extensive refurbishment program.



Eight of the ship's existing balconies were refurbished and extended while 26 new balconies were added to cabins on deck six while 17 were added on deck seven.

The fitting was completed in the city of Piraeus, Greece in just under three weeks in tandem with other hotel upgrades and technical maintenance.

Each balcony extends 1.4 metres from the ship's bulkhead; the length of each balcony is between 2.8 metres & 5.8 metres.

Refurbishment of other Celestyal Cruises' ships is ongoing, *Celestyal Olympia* which is having 21 junior suites, nine suites, the remaining 227 outside

cabins and public areas upgraded.

The current work marks the second phase of the company's investment program which will also see a soft refurbishment of the cabins and public spaces aboard the *Celestyal Nefeli*.

"We are certain the improved décor & comfort on all of our vessels will help us provide our cruisers the best, most authentic on board experience going forward," the line said.

Celestyal is the only cruise operator home porting in Greece, and has also launched a new Cuba Cruises brand which will operate seven-day voyages to the burgeoning destination.

## Amazon Hurtigruten

**FROM** 2017 Hurtigruten's expedition ships will operate new voyages to the Amazon rainforest, as well as Canada and even the world's longest fjord.

When it comes to the Amazon, Hurtigruten's first ever inland sailing will travel through the Brazilian rainforest on a new 16 night expedition cruise.

Other highlights of the 2017 program include four new trips to Newfoundland & Labrador with highlights including Baffin Bay, Torngat Mountains National Park, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.

Hurtigruten ceo Daniel Skjeldam said the company wanted to offer guests unique and meaningful experiences regardless of the water temperature.

"People no longer want to spend their vacations being passive spectators.

"Therefore Hurtigruten offers active and educational voyages. We want to give guests genuinely close encounters with nature and culture." Skjeldam added.

## Origin spirit at sea

**P&O** Cruises is taking Australia's greatest sporting rivalry to sea, announcing the inaugural State of Origin Cruise.

Priced from \$799 per person the cruise will depart Brisbane on 28 May with an overnight stay in Sydney for the series opener on 01 June as well as calls at Moreton Island and Newcastle.

The seven-night *Pacific Dawn* cruise includes a bronze State of Origin ticket for each guest plus transfers to and from ANZ Stadium, with the option to upgrade seats for a nominal fee.

P&O Cruises senior vp Sture Myrmell said the cruise line's expansion to a five-ship fleet had allowed it to bolster its event offering to include one of the biggest fixtures on the local sporting calendar.

"Guests on the inaugural State of Origin cruise will be getting some of the hottest tickets in town included as part of their cruise fare - it's seriously great value," Myrmell said.



## Announcing VIEW & VERANDAH

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AGENT  
UPDATE

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2017 Arctic Expeditions - Open Now



## ACA Update



Jill Abel - CEO

## Land evolution

AS cruise lines are constantly upping the ante for what they deliver on board, ground operators are also evolving their land-based touring options to meet the needs of international and domestic cruise passengers.

"The cruiser of yesterday is not the cruiser of today," says Tyler Wood of the Bob Wood Cruise Group. "With many different age groups and interests to appeal to, ground operators need to offer a more diversified touring program."

Wood cites cost effective city tours as the most popular among international clients but these are now being tweaked to include more interactive experiences, meeting locals and highlighting trending interests such as the coffee culture.

A new tour that's appealing for multi-generational family groups is a golf buggy scavenger hunt on Hamilton Island. Wood says this is a fantastic way for families to have fun together.

At Akorn/Abercrombie and Kent, Toby Biddick says luxury clients prefer small group touring offering intimate local experiences to get to the heart of a destination.

Biddick cites their Botanical Ark tour as a good example. This small group experience travels into the Daintree Rainforest to visit a private ethno-botanical garden. Guests take an interpretive tour where they learn about unique plant species from endangered rainforests throughout the world.

Biddick says "Community integration has become critically important to providing a memorable experience at each port of call."

## Lindblad confirms two newbuilds

LINDBLAD Expedition Holdings has announced definitive agreements with Nichols Brothers Boat Builders for the construction of two new US-flagged coastal cruise vessels.

The new 100-guest ships have been designed with the input of "decades of experience of captains, expedition leaders, engineers and designers," the company said, with the first set for completion in the second quarter of 2017 and the second one a year later.

"These new ships mark an exciting step in the long-term growth of the company, and enables us to capitalise on the substantial demand for our expeditions," said the company's ceo Sven Lindblad.

The ships will have 50 cabins, 22 with balconies and eight that can be configured into adjoining cabins for families.

They'll have a fleet of sea kayaks, paddle boards and specially designed landing craft, a fully equipped fitness room and wellness spa and a full suite of

warm and cold water diving gear.

There will also be "state-of-the-art expedition technology" including a remotely operated vehicle, video microscope and a hydrophone and bow-cam.

The ships will cost US\$48m and US \$46.8m respectively.

Nichols Brothers previously built Lindblad's current US-flagged ships, the *National Geographic Sea Lion* and *National Geographic Sea Bird*.

"With our significant resources we can continue to deliver on our promise of expedition travel at its best, and can now expand our unique offerings in the Americas where we have very strong demand," Lindblad said.

## Koningsdam video

HOLLAND America Line has launched its second 'Countdown to *Koningsdam* video (TD 19 Dec) which provides the latest updates on the new ship's construction.

Hosted by the ship's inaugural cruise director, Jonathan Rogers, the new video features HAL vice president deployment and tour marketing, Linda Springmann, talking about the ship's inaugural year itineraries which include voyages in the Mediterranean, northern Europe and Caribbean.

To view the update see [cruiseweekly.com.au/videos](http://cruiseweekly.com.au/videos).



## RCI promotion

LORI Cassidy has been named Associate Vice President of Global Corporate, Incentive & Charter Sales at Royal Caribbean International.

Cassidy will continue to report directly to Vicki Freed, senior vp of sales and trade support & service, with responsibility for all sales, service and marketing efforts pertaining to global meeting, incentive and full-ship charter business.

That also includes the RCI loyalty gift card and individual incentive certificate programs.



## Azamara referrals

AZAMARA Club Cruises has launched a new 'Refer & Receive' component for its Le Club Voyage loyalty program, giving the scheme's 90,000 members the opportunity to earn up to US\$900 in future cruise credits for referring new guests to the line.



ELVIS is alive - and cruising through Southeast Asia.

The Cruise Gallery - part of Victorian travel agency Meridian Travel - has launched a "Rockin' the Mekong" music cruise which features one of Australia's leading tribute artists, Damian Mullin (pictured below).

The 13-day trip departs Australia on 18 Sep 2016 and will include a Mekong voyage aboard *RV La Marguerite* through Vietnam and Cambodia.

Cruise Gallery director Jodie Quick said the unique departure is "an opportunity to present something different with a more intimate atmosphere".

"Most music cruises are on larger ships sailing around the Pacific Islands. Rockin' the Mekong gives passengers the chance to travel somewhere more adventurous and exotic with the comfort of Elvis' crooning!" she said.

A special bonus will see bookings made by 31 Jan receive a free ticket to an upcoming Elvis tribute show in Sydney or Melbourne.

You'd have to feel sorry for Mullin, who will probably get a little hot and bothered in the steamy Indochina climate wearing his Viva Las Vegas outfit.



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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia  
Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia  
P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Editor: Bruce Piper [info@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:info@cruiseweekly.com.au)  
Contributors: Guy Dundas, Jenny Piper, Nathalie Craig, Bonnie Tai, Jasmine O'Donoghue  
Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Magda Herdzik [ads@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:ads@cruiseweekly.com.au)  
Business Manager: Jenny Piper [accounts@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:accounts@cruiseweekly.com.au)

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