

CRUISE

WEEKLY



Tuesday 05 May 2015

P&O 48-hour sale

BEGINNING this morning, P&O Cruises Australia has kicked off a 48-hour May sale, with “super fares” available on a range of 30 cruises from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Singapore.

Fares include a two-night P&O SeaBreak priced from \$99pp quad share or a nine-night voyage to the Loyalty Islands for \$549ppqs.

New brand & season

PORTUGAL'S Douro Valley stars in Scenic's newly launched 2016 European river cruise brochure, launched to the trade last week.

The season sees the addition of *Scenic Azure*, specially designed for the Western European river, while another new ship, *Scenic Amber*, will cruise on the Danube.

A new eight-day Iconic Danube itinerary has been introduced, sailing from Passau to Budapest.

C360 to Vancouver

CLIA Head Office has announced Vancouver will again play host to Cruise3sixty next year, with the event to take place 01-06 Jun.

The Western Canadian city last hosted the event in 2013 and will again welcome the cruise industry for one-on-one business appointments, panel discussions, social occasions and ship tours.

Cruise3sixty 2015 wrapped up last week, with over 2,000 travel agents and cruise line executives in attendance, with 19 cruise ships positioned in town and conducting frequent inspections.

Grand Circle down under

US TRAVEL group Grand Circle Corporation is set to expand its cruising operations into Australasia, with a new vessel to be based in southeast Asia, *Cruise Weekly* can exclusively reveal.

From next year, the vessel will be based in SE Asia, operating cruises to northern Australia as well as Borneo and Vietnam.

The company is seeking to appoint a “regional manager - small ships” for the region.

“We are also keen to hear from prospective Australian vendors and experienced expedition team members who are interested in being considered for positions onboard the new ship,” Grand Circle Cruise Line vice-president small ships Joel Katz told *CW*.

Grand Circle Travel was founded in 1958, and is a large US operator, offering “distinctive international vacations for older Americans”.

It's a family of brands, including Grand Circle Cruise Line which runs river cruise and small ship voyages via a fleet of 50-250 pax vessels either fully owned or privately chartered and operated exclusively for the company.

Other brands in the family include Overseas Adventure Travel, Grand Circle Small Ship Cruises and the philanthropic arm Grand Circle Foundation.

The new Regional Manager - Small Ships - SE Asia/Australasia role will be responsible for the development of “new programs

for our new South-East Asia based small ship operation,” working with regional managers to deliver day-to-day land operations and create a team of on-board program directors.

The company is seeking someone with a strong Asian travel or tourism background, ideally in small ships or expedition cruising.

The company's Sydney based regional general manager David Thomas confirmed that the expansion would involve a small ship to operate in northern Australia, also cruising into PNG and Indonesia with itineraries commencing from next year.

He said the operation would be primarily targeting Grand Circle's strong base of US clients.

Further details of the ship and itineraries are expected to be released in the coming months.

Companions 50% off

ELIGIBLE new bookings on Royal Caribbean are priced at 50% off companion fares under a new sale launched by the line, valid for departures of five nights or longer departing in 2016 and 2017.

An eight-night *Legend of the Seas* cruise start at \$1,099 for the first pax & \$549.50 for a partner.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Suite RCI rewards

PASSENGERS booking suite staterooms on Royal Caribbean Int'l are set to be rewarded under a new amenity program now under development by the line.

Unveiled at Cruise3sixty in Fort Lauderdale by RCI senior vice president of sales Vicki Freed, the amenity program is currently slated for rollout from next year.

“We really want to make it a wow,” Freed said at the show.

Early details would see suite guests able to access a range of extras including private areas on the ship and exclusive restaurants.

Live like the Royals

APT is giving agents the chance to spend a weekend living like Kings and Queens, with five Royal Experiences up for grabs in a new incentive launched late last week.

In line with the tour operator's newly launched Royal Collection 2016 European river cruise guide, agents need to book and deposit any voyage of eight days or more prior to 30 Jun to earn an entry.

Five prizes are available to win, which will see up to six agents per store spend a weekend being chauffeured and pampered.

The 281-page APT Royal Collection brochure features info on two new ships joining the fleet including *AmaStella* & *AmaViola* (*CW* 09 Jan) as well as a host of exclusive Royal inclusions.

Journeys in the Bordeaux region are also highlighted along with new Freedom of Choice touring.

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Feeling cruisey in the UAE



ABOVE: MSC Cruises managing director Australasia Lynne Clarke is currently attending Arabian Travel Market as a hosted buyer, courtesy of Dubai Tourism.

CW spotted her yesterday on the Cruise Arabia stand - a joint initiative which brings together tourism authorities in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Qatar and Sharjah to provide a "single voice" for the inbound cruise industry.

Cruise Arabia's five members work to promote the Gulf region

as a whole, with the aim of encouraging more ship arrivals to the area.

Clarke is **pictured** above with, from left: Saeed Humaid Al Zari from DP World; Dubai Tourism's manager of Cruise Tourism, Suresh Babu Balan and Dubai Tourism director of Cruise Tourism Jamal Humaid Al Falasi.

May sale for Mothers

MSC Cruises is celebrating mothers everywhere by launching a new Grand May Sale just in time for Mother's Day this weekend.

Discounted fares have been released for over 150 departures from next month to Apr 2016, starting from \$339ppts for a seven-night Mediterranean cruise as well as price cuts on upgrades.

The sale has kicked off today & is open for bookings to 31 May.

Slip sliding on Oasis

ROYAL Caribbean has confirmed it will add water slides as a new feature to its mega-liners *Oasis of the Seas* and *Allure of the Seas*.

The upgrade comes to bring the two vessels in line with their third sister-ship *Harmony of the Seas*, as well as the fourth yet-to-be-named Oasis vessel in 2018.

Speaking at Cruise3sixty in Fort Lauderdale, Royal Caribbean ceo Michael Bayley said he wouldn't rule out adding water slides to Quantum-class vessels in future.

1m Dubai cruisers by 2020

TOURISM officials in Dubai are confident that the destination will more than double its cruise visitation in the next five years, with one million passengers being targeted by 2020.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly** at Arabian Travel Market yesterday, Senior Vice President of the Dubai Events & Convention Bureau Hamad M Bin Mejren

(**pictured**) said Dubai was continuing its regional cruise leadership which started in 2006 when the first home-ported vessels, from Costa and Aida, were deployed to sail from Dubai.

From just 7,000 passengers annually 15 years ago, Dubai this year expects to welcome 425,000 cruise arrivals from 115 port calls - up 30% year-on-year.

Five cruise lines will homeport seven vessels in Dubai during 2015, with Mejren saying the emirate is positioned as "one of the leading [northern] winter cruise destinations in the world".

Key to the expected boom has been the introduction last year of a multiple entry visa for cruise pax (**CW** 21 Aug 2014) which is tipped to open new key markets - in particular India and China.

Previously, visa requirements for travellers from those countries meant they could be paying



around 30% of the cost of their cruise fare just in visas, with the new option costing just US\$50.

Mejren said Cruise Dubai has been heavily promoting the new option since it was announced, with a roadshow in India.

The visa is also applicable for cruise passengers from Russia, South Africa and Brazil, as well as almost 50 countries (like Australia and New Zealand) where citizens do not require a visa for the UAE.

Dubai has also been working hard to develop cruise infrastructure, with the opening of a third cruise terminal.

Figures released yesterday by Dubai Tourism which reported strong growth in overnight visitation for the full year in 2014 now include people staying on cruise ships in the official figures, signalling the increasing importance of the sector to the emirate's tourism industry.

Cruise Calendar	
This week's port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia and New Zealand.	
SYDNEY <i>Carnival Spirit</i>	08 May
BRISBANE <i>Pacific Dawn</i>	09 May
FREMANTLE <i>Pacific Jewel</i>	07 May
DARWIN <i>Sun Princess</i>	06 May
<i>Oceanic Discoverer</i>	07 May
<i>MS Insignia</i>	07 May
<i>Silver Discoverer</i>	09 May
CAIRNS <i>MS Insignia</i>	10 May
FREMANTLE <i>Pacific Jewel</i>	07 May
AUCKLAND <i>Pacific Pearl</i>	08 May



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Westerdam joins west

HOLLAND America Line has positioned its *MS Westerdam* ship on voyages from Seattle to Alaska for the 2015 summer, taking its fleet total for the season to three.

The ship joins *MS Statendam* and *MS Amsterdam* on the route, collectively operating 47 cruises to Alaska, Panama and Hawaii.

Windstar rounds ice

ROUNDTRIP sailings completely circumnavigating Iceland have been scheduled by Windstar Cruises for Jul 2016, to be operated by *Star Legend*.

Departing and returning to Reykjavik, the seven-night cruise will feature stops in Surtsey Island and overnight in Seydisfjörður.

NCL fee permanent

FOLLOWING a successful trial period, Norwegian Cruise Line has opted to make its new US\$7.95 room service charge (**CW** 02 Apr) permanent as of 01 May.

The fee will apply to hot food items from an expanded menu which a passenger requests to be delivered directly to a stateroom.

Excluded however from the fee will be continental breakfast and morning coffee, while guests travelling in suites and The Haven will not pay the fee at all.

The latest enhancement to the onboard offering follows the abolition last month of the \$15 cover charge at Asian restaurants.

Lineup for fan cruise

HALL of Fame Quarterback and current commentator Warren Moon heads the lineup of current and former Seattle Seahawks NFL players to join an upcoming Princess Cruises fan voyage.

Departing Seattle on 20 Jun onboard *Crown Princess*, the ex-players also include Seahawks cheerleaders & the club mascot.

Passengers travelling on the cruise will enjoy regular meet and greet opportunities with the players, as well as opportunities to take part in games & activities alongside their NFL heroes.

Players will also conduct special Q&A sessions and talk about their favourite on-field memories.

Splendida at Hamburg

MSC Cruises has inaugurated its ship *MSC Splendida* at its new homeport of Hamburg, Germany, making it the largest ship to homeport in the German city.

The vessel will operate 13 trips to the Baltic region, the British Isles and Norwegian Fjords.

Sydney-bound Explorer shining



EXPLORER of the Seas is showing off the fruits of 40-days of labour which saw the ship completely transformed into the state-of-the-art RCI product.

Having just arrived at its winter home of Southampton (**CW** Thu), the ship now offers capacity for 3,228 pax - an increase of 114 following the addition of 86 new cabins across multiple categories.

New technology was added to the ship, including virtual balconies (**pictured** above) to all interior cabins as well as digital wayfinding to help pax locate rooms, toilets, onboard venues and even view the daily planner.

Chops Grille steakhouse, Izumi Japanese and Giovanni's Table are three new speciality eateries now onboard, while the main dining room has also been refreshed.

The product onboard *Explorer of the Seas* is now identical to that onboard fellow Voyager-class ship *Voyager of the Seas*, both of which will be based in Sydney for the 2015/16 wave season.

Both ships will be joined by *Radiance of the Seas* in Sydney this coming summer, while for the first time, *Legend of the Seas* will make its summer home in Brisbane - a 50% capacity boost.



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SEEING as Clive Palmer is now unlikely to be building his ambitious *Titanic II* cruise ship project, somebody else has stepped up to the plate and built his own replica - albeit of Lego.

An immersing time-lapse video has been released of a youngster putting together a giant Lego kit of the *RMS Titanic*, made out of an eye-watering 30,000 pieces.

The video shows several different bases built, comprising decks of the ship, which were then combined to form the gigantic and lifelike replica.

Amusingly, the boy building the model appears to grow considerably larger all of a sudden, suggesting the project was completed over a long period of time as he grew.

CLICK HERE to watch the clip.

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