



Former CIC ships to resume service

Athena, Arion, Funchal, Princess Daphne and *Princess Danae* have new names, new homes and new owners.

ACCORDING to discussions on shipping forums and a blogger in Portugal, Classic International Cruises' five arrested ships are poised for a comeback.

In his 'Ships and the Sea' blog, Luís Miguel Correia reports that four of the vessels have been sold by creditors to Portuguese businessman Rui Alegre, while the fifth, *Princess Daphne*, has been bought by the Greece-based Potamianos brothers, heirs of the defunct CIC's founder.

Athena, which would have been based in Western Australia this season, has been renamed *Astoria* and chartered for the Russian market, offering Black Sea, Mediterranean and Adriatic cruises from Jul until Nov.

CW located the "cruises in Slavic style" advertised on a Russian website by Royal Caravela Cruise Lines.

The site promotes that the rebranded ship will have "complete Russian language service on board" and "the provision of Russian tours on the most popular routes".

Most departures leave from Crimea, Ukraine.

In the meantime, the ex-*Athena*, which has been laid up since Sep 2012 in Marseilles, France, and *Princess Danae*, which already has a Portuguese crew onboard, are expected to be moved to Lisbon.

Arion, which was detained in Kotor and later moved to Montenegro's port of Bar, arrived in Lisbon earlier this month after it was released from foreclosure proceedings on 9 Mar.

Funchal is undergoing an extensive refit after two years out of service.

On 27 Feb, a new management company, Portuscale Cruises, was formed in Lisbon following an agreement between the bank, Montepio, principal creditor of the companies involved in the CIC collapse, Emilios, Alexander Potamianos, and the new owner Rui Alegre.

The company has since opened an office in downtown Lisbon, employing several former CIC employees.

Four "owning companies" have also been set up in Madeira, with each to take ownership of one ship.

MEANWHILE, CIC founder George Potamianos' sons have held onto the 1955-built *Princess Daphne* and are apparently free of debts.

In Nov, the five vessels were seized when the European division of CIC collapsed, leading to the end of CIC Australia shortly before *Athena* arrived in Fremantle for the 2012-13 summer.

Cunard releases 2014 program

LUXURY seven-night Mediterranean voyages aboard *Queen Elizabeth* priced from \$1,099 per person highlighted the release of Cunard's 2014 cruise schedule.

Onboard credits of up to \$150 per person are also available for the reservation of a Select Sailing group allocation of 10 pax or more.

Departures have been scheduled for Athens, Rome and Venice between Jun-Nov 2014 as part of *Queen Elizabeth's* maiden season cruising in the Mediterranean.

Cabins for the new schedule go on sale from 10pm Australian time on 09 Apr.

Astor suites are sailing away

CABINS aboard Cruise & Maritime Voyages' elegant Fremantle-bound *Astor* vessel are selling extremely quickly in all three categories.

Set to make her Australian debut next summer, the 620-pax *Astor* will operate 15 itineraries, with the longer voyages proving to be the most popular among consumers.

"The market is saying that the product is of a high standard, the suites are priced well and the added inclusions are very popular," CMV Australia sales and marketing manager Vilma Rovedatti said.

Saver fares, offering up to 25% discount on full published fares are available until 15 May on a limited number of twin-cabin bookings.

Eighth vessel for Un-Cruise

SEATTLE based small ship company Un-Cruise Adventures has taken possession of its eighth vessel in the form of the 64-pax *Safari Voyager*.

Seven of the company's eight ships are deployed on departures in Alaska, Hawaii, the Sea of Cortes and the Pacific Northwest.

ALL THE CRUISE NEWS

Today's trade issue of **CW** features 4 pages of the latest from the world of cruising, plus a full page from *Cruise Holidays* on **page 5** inviting the trade to its Australian operation.

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March of mishaps and malfunctions

This month has seen an unusual number of ship groundings, mechanical breakdowns and gastro outbreaks.

THE cruise industry and travel agents will be pleased to see the end of this shocking period of problems at sea.

In particular, Carnival Cruise Lines must be hoping for a swift end to its bad run lately.

After the headline-grabbing "cruise from hell", following an engine room fire on *Carnival Triumph* in Feb, the line has had mechanical issues with three other ships.

On 9 Mar, *Carnival Elation* experienced steering problems as it left New Orleans.

Five days later, in the Caribbean, *Carnival Legend* was slowed down to 14 knots due to a faulty propulsion unit, and then the same issue flared up on two subsequent cruises, causing the ship to skip ports of call.

On 15 Mar, a technical glitch hit *Carnival Dream*, which caused toilets and lifts to stop working, with passengers disembarked and flown home.



COULD you only imagine if this happened on a Disney Cruise Line?

A disabled US man has been compensated US\$8000 (AU\$7660) by Disneyland for pain and suffering after the "It's A Small World" attraction broke down inside the castle, with the ride's high-pitched, repetitive theme song playing non-stop throughout, as it couldn't be turned off.

Jose Martinez, who uses a wheelchair and suffers from panic attacks and high blood pressure, spent 30 minutes stranded on the ride before he was "rescued".

Triumph is to remain out of service until Jun, cancelling more than 10 sailings.

Even its newest ship was affected by drama, with the launch of *Carnival Sunshine* postponed for further improvements and its first two cruises canned.

P&O UK's *Ventura* was the next to be crippled by a faulty starboard propeller on a transatlantic crossing, missing one port in order to return to Southampton on time.

Then, the British line had the most horrific incident of all, when two *Adonia* passengers were mugged and shot in Barbados.

Earlier this month, Lindblad Expeditions' *Sea Lion* struck a submerged rock near Panama and was forced to cancel its cruise.

In the same week, Hurtigruten's *Kong Harald* ran aground in Norway, and then a few days later, in a nearby fjord, Cruise & Maritime Voyages' *Marco Polo* hit an uncharted rock and cancelled its next departure.

Kicking off the nightmare month, on 1 Mar, CMV also abandoned the inaugural (already delayed) sailing of *Discovery* after it was detained by authorities for a technical problem.

The troubles spread to river cruising when the *American Queen* riverboat's smokestack had a gasket failure while sailing along the Mississippi River.

In Australia, the onboard helicopter of North Star Cruises' *True North* was disabled in high winds while embarking passengers on Dirk Hartog Island, Western Australia, and withdrawn for repairs.

On the same trip, there was a small fire on the WA-based vessel, which delayed its departure from Fremantle by 48 hours.

MEANWHILE, Mar has seen a rise in the number of gastrointestinal illnesses on cruises.

Outbreaks occurred on the *Queen Elizabeth* in the South Pacific and on *Vision of the Seas*, *Ruby Princess* and *Carnival Miracle* in the Caribbean.

Princess, Carnival and Holland America ships also ditched Grand Turk from their itineraries after passengers became sick following visits to the port.

Moonshadow cruising is a hit

THE recently launched City Sights and Sounds Cruise in Newcastle Harbour by Moonshadow Cruises has proven to be a runaway success.

The harbour cruise was run in partnership with the City of Newcastle, with support also from Destination NSW's 2011/12 Regional Tourism Product Development Program.

"It's really exciting to see the enthusiasm there is in Newcastle for new tourism product," Moonshadow bdm Janene Rees said.

"There are so many opportunities coming to light from this new cruise that will benefit many businesses as well as the local population".

Royal Class Annual Sale

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Cruise News & Views...

White Bay Terminal

THE port of Sydney is booming according to data from Sydney Ports, which shows ship visits increased by 30% last year and a further 30% this year to a total of 265 visits.

Cruising into Sydney Harbour is a highlight for all cruise passengers, so a positive embark/disembark experience is critical to the overall success of the Australasia region as a developing cruise destination.

When the Sydney Harbour Bridge was built in the 1920's, not a lot of thought was given to the potential size of cruise ships nearly 100 years later!

Having a dense residential population situated on the edge of one of the most beautiful harbours in the world also means it is no easy task to create an infrastructure solution that will please both the cruise industry and property owners.

The road bridge sits less than 55 metres above the water - so the largest ship that's ever been able to go under this bridge is Princess Cruises Sun-class ships.

Sometimes, cruise ships make it under the bridge with a clearance of only a few metres.

To combat the demand for Sydney in the short term, Sydney Ports recently installed a new mooring point at the Circular Quay Overseas Passenger Terminal to accommodate the increasing number of larger cruise ships now visiting Sydney.

Next month will see the opening of a new \$60 million cruise terminal at White Bay on the western side of the Sydney Harbour Bridge but with the future of cruise ship design destined to focus on larger ships delivering greater economies of scale the role of the local port authority will remain a huge challenge.

Aussies targeted in P&O Europe sailings

UK-BASED P&O Cruises World Cruising has high hopes of appealing to Australian cruisers with the extensive deployment of *Ventura* in the Mediterranean next year.

The brand's md, Carol Marlow, unveiled the 2014 program which includes a series of 14-night roundtrip cruises departing from Venice.

There are also seven night options, with Marlow saying the move follows research which showed interest in cruises from more than just P&O's traditional UK-based ports.

Ventura will operate from Europe between Mar and Oct, and the itineraries are hoped to be particularly popular with Australians "who are taking more cruise holidays in Australia than ever before".

In a telephone media briefing from London yesterday, Marlow confirmed that Australians were the biggest international market for P&O Cruises World Cruising, which operates seven vessels and has an eighth on the way.

The Mediterranean season for *Ventura* will also see the ship spruced up after a refurbishment which will include the installation of 18 "solo cabins" - mirroring the offering on sister ship *Azura*, which has proven very popular.

RCCL reach Alaska milestone

ROYAL Caribbean has chalked up 25 years of cruising in Alaska, with a celebration coinciding with the launch of its 2014 cruise departure program for the destination.

In all, 34 departures will be operated by the *Radiance of the Seas* and *Rhapsody of the Seas*, all on seven night itineraries from Vancouver.

Shore excursion options include a Royal Caribbean Cruisetour, in which guests will be able to combine a 3-6 night land adventure with their cruise on *Radiance of the Seas*.

MEANWHILE, Royal Caribbean Early Bird sale periods close on 31 Mar, having already been extended for a further four weeks, with double savings available on some 2013/14 departures.

Thailand to invest in cruising

CRUISING ports, as well as other travel infrastructure will be invested in to the tune of US\$67.6b (AU\$64b) by the Thai Government over the next seven years.

The country's cabinet approved the financing earlier this week, which will see up to four new cruise terminals built along the banks of Bangkok's main river as well as along the Gulf of Thailand and coastlines of the Andaman Sea.

Ventura also now features a new The Retreat outdoor spa, The Glass House by Olly Smith wine bar and restaurant, and a new 'East' Thai/Indonesian dining venue by celebrity chef Atul Kochhar - complementing the existing upmarket eatery by Marco Pierre White.

Currently, Australians comprise around 10% of P&O's passenger numbers on UK-based cruises, with even more travelling on the brand's round-world voyages.

MEANWHILE, Aussie travel agents are a key part of the new strategy, which has also seen the introduction of an enhanced Select Sailing program for group bookings on P&O Cruises World Cruising.

Under the changes, agents who reserve an allocation of ten passengers or more on a cruise will receive an onboard credit of £50 per person for cruises of eight nights or more.

There are also group rates of 5% off launch fares, plus a one in 16 bonus berth.



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Regal Princess is floated out

PRINCESS Cruises' new *Regal Princess* has met the water for the first time, after being floated out of the Italian Fincantieri shipyard.

After seven months of construction, the new liner will now be floated, before being taken to sea later this weekend for rigorous testing of the ship's systems as well as its revolutionary glass-bottomed SeaWalk top-deck.

Regal Princess is expected to make its cruising debut in Jun 2014, with new sister ship *Royal Princess* preceding this coming Jun.

Oasis to visit UK port in 2014

ROYAL Caribbean's second largest vessel *Oasis of the Seas* will visit the UK port of Southampton in England in autumn next year, the cruising juggernaut has confirmed.

The visit on 15 Oct 2014 will make *Oasis* the largest ship ever to dock in the UK.

Southampton will serve as a stop on a voyage departing from Rotterdam, Netherlands as part of a 13-night transatlantic voyage back to its long-term home of Port Everglades, Florida.

Royal Caribbean International associate vice president and general manager Jo Rzymowska said *Oasis* will be the hottest ticket in town.

"Bringing the world's largest cruise ship to Europe and specifically the UK & Southampton is testament to the commitment to selling cruise demonstrated by our trade partners.

We will be developing sales tools to support agents such as a dedicated brochure & training modules - we can't wait to get started selling the world's largest and most innovative cruise ship," Rzymowska said.

Windstar Europe open for sale

EUROPEAN voyages aboard small-ship cruise firm Windstar Cruises have opened for sale, with three new itineraries and nine new ports.

New voyages include a nine-night Sicilian Splendours and the seven-night Gems of the Adriatic and Best of Europe's West Coast.

Ports in Italy and Malta are being featured as the company's newest ports of call as well as stops at Greek islands and the Amalfi Coast.

The Disney touch on shore excursions

DISNEY Cruise Line has rolled out a range of Signature Collection Port Adventures ahead of the debut of the *Disney Magic* in Europe.

The range is aimed at bringing the iconic storytelling of Disney to guests in an upscale setting along with exclusive shore activities.

Available options in Venice include a private tour of the Doge's Palace, or to enjoy a Disney reception with princesses and musicians.

In the Turkish port of Kusadasi, guests can embark on an archeological quest to unearth clues to find the missing piece of an ancient tablet while touring the Ephesus site.

Children can create their own miniature Greek statuesque momento on port excursions in Athens, while parents can visit the Acropolis



or learn to make authentic Greek cuisine.

Other Disney-themed options are available in other Greek Isles ports, Croatia and Rome.

Disney Magic will operate 12 cruises from Barcelona to the Mediterranean from 01 Jun as part of its three month-season.

Crystal expands solo program

MORE than a dozen new cruises departing between Jun and Dec will be open to single travellers under Crystal Cruises' "Sole Occupancy" program, which offers discounted single supplements of 10% on select voyages.

The reduced solo traveller levy program will apply to deluxe staterooms on *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony* sailings in the Baltic, Mediterranean, South America/Caribbean, Western Europe, Black Sea, North Cape, British Isles and eastern Canada departures.

MEANWHILE, Crystal Cruises has today rolled out a range of private car land-touring options for luxury travellers while in ports in Europe.

The initial rollout will be on 50 Mediterranean and Northern European ports from next month, with plans for expansion later in the year.

Hapag-Lloyd launch new guide

A CLASSICAL music themed itinerary and a gourmet food and wine festival at sea feature in the new brochure from Hapag-Lloyd Cruises.

Additional new inclusions in the 2014 Europa International brochure is a Kids Cruise Free deal whereby children 11yrs and under sharing a cabin with at least one adult travels for free.

New ports will be visited during the year, with the Europa planning stops in The Azores, Canary Islands and Spain during a 16-day sailing from Barcelona to Lisbon, also stopping in Morocco during the voyage.

New A-Rosa voyages on Rhine

A RANGE of newly developed river cruises on the Rhine between Amsterdam, Basel and Cologne has been rolled out by A-Rosa River Cruises, with discounted single supplements available on some sailings for a limited time.

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