

# TO 'AUSSIFY' OR NOT TO 'AUSSIFY'?

## Carnival and Royal Caribbean take different approaches to Australian market

By Ian McMahon

THE world's two biggest cruise lines are taking very different approaches to adapting their products to the Australian market.

Carnival Cruise Lines (CCL) will have capacity in Australian waters for the first time when *Carnival Spirit* arrives here in October next year for the 2012/13 summer season.

And the company, which has set up an Australian office under Sydney-based director Jennifer Vandekreeke, has enthusiastically embraced what it calls the "Aussification" of the first of its ships ever to be based outside US waters. But Royal Caribbean International, no stranger to Australia, is espousing a different approach.

RCI, which is bringing *Voyager of the Seas*, the largest passenger vessel ever to mount an Australia-based cruise program, to Australia in 2012/13, plans only minor modifications to its "international" product.

CCL brought its plans for *Carnival Spirit* into sharp focus earlier this month when it announced a competition to encourage Australians to participate in its "Aussification".

The line invited Australians to enter a competition to name the thrill slide to be installed on *Spirit* when she goes into dry dock in January next year. The 56 metre long slide has been designed "specifically with adventure-loving Aussies in mind", according to CCL.

Australians can suggest names via facebook for the chance to win a trip to the US to cruise on *Carnival Spirit* and be one of the first to go down the slide.

This is just the first phase of a wider CCL plan to use social media to involve Australians in "Aussifying" *Carnival Spirit*.



Royal Caribbean's *Radiance of the Seas* in Sydney Harbour

Said Vandekreeke: "We're committed to the Aussie market. We're planning on making some material changes to *Carnival Spirit* prior to her arrival in Sydney. Some of them are basic hardware changes such as Aussie power points and Aussie pokies.

"Then, we're getting rid of tipping, since it's just not part of Aussie culture.

"And, we're changing the menus out of respect to the Aussie palate: for example, there will be tomatoes and Aussie bacon at breakfast.

"We want to make sure we bring the Aussie spirit to the *Carnival Spirit*. So, we're reaching out through social media and asking Australians to help us 'Aussify' the ship. The first order of business? Naming the thrill slide."

By contrast Royal Caribbean has opted to stick substantially with the same product that it offers passengers all around the world, with only minor "comfort" modifications (such as the availability of Vegemite!).

The line's Australian managing director Gavin Smith admitted that senior US and Australian executives spent considerable time agonising over the decision but had decided to continue with such features as

US dollar onboard currency.

"There are brands in the local market that do that (offer an "Aussified" product) but we are offering an international product that brings together people from all over the world," he said.

Smith said there would be Australian wines and beers available but they would be part of a wide selection of international beverages.

He said Australians are mature travellers who are quite comfortable ordering a foreign beer.

Asked about the contrast with CCL's "Aussification" plans, Smith said Carnival has hitherto catered essentially for the North American market and it is likely, therefore, that it has a greater need to adapt to Australian conditions than Royal Caribbean with its international offering.

His comments echoed those of Dan Hanrahan, president and chief executive of Celebrity Cruises, another Royal Caribbean Cruises company, which is bringing its top-of-the-line *Celebrity Solstice* here in 2013.

Hanrahan, who serves as chairman of the Miami Wine and Food Festival is personally a fan of Australian wines

and he said they would certainly be part of the selection available aboard *Solstice*.

Speaking to *travelBulletin* while in Australia earlier this year, Hanrahan opined that the Australian wines may be ordered more by non-Australians wanting to sample something different while Australians are likely to take advantage of the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the wines of other countries

Pointing to the high ratings which *Solstice* class ships have received from Australians who have cruised on them in other parts of the world, Hanrahan suggested only minor tweaking of the onboard product will be needed while *Celebrity Solstice* is in Australian waters.

■ CCL should have no shortage of advice on "Aussifying" *Carnival Spirit* from sister lines also owned by parent company, Carnival Corporation.

P&O Australia has long provided the archetypal Australian cruise experience in the form of South Pacific cruises that still account for the bulk of Australians who take a cruise every year.

And "international" line, Princess Cruises, which has steadily built its presence in Australia over the years to the point where it now has four ships based here, was this year inducted into the National Travel Industry Awards' Hall of Fame following its third consecutive award for best Australian cruise operator.

Princess clearly believes in adapting its product to local tastes, publicising its "onboard currency of Australian dollars and entertainment geared to Australian tastes".

And in the case of New Zealand cruises, the line promises "a Kiwi experience onboard ranging from New Zealand cuisine through to cultural talks and local movies".

## 30,000 berths a day in 2012/13 as capacity drives growth

AUSTRALIANS are seeing more local deployment of ships, rather than one-off port visits, as cruise capacity steadily escalates.

"By October 2012 we will have 16 large ships based locally for a minimum of four months," points out International Cruise Council of Australasia (ICCA) general manager Brett Jardine.

"This equates to 30,000 berths per day to be filled so no doubt there will be some

great deals around that will help to entice an increased number of first time cruisers looking for a great value holiday option.

"This season there are a number of ships heading our way for the first time that will also add to capacity – ships such as Royal Caribbean's *Radiance of the Seas* and *Celebrity Century*, Holland America's *Zaandam*, Princess Cruises' *Sea Princess* and *Costa Deliziosa*."

We will also see Cunard's *QM2* and

Silversea's *Silver Shadow* based in our waters for extended periods.

The visiting ships are increasingly visiting regional ports. "Western Australian ports like Albany and Geraldton have featured on an increasing number of itineraries in recent years, while this season we'll see Holland America visit Eden and next year *Seabourn* will call at Batemans Bay," says Jardine.

"So not only will more cruise ships see

more of Australia, but more Australians will be exposed to more visiting ships, helping to put cruising top of mind with consumers."

Jardine has no doubt that growth from this market continues to be capacity driven.

"As an industry we are in an enviable position of being able to deliver a great value holiday option for people who are watching what they spend in the current uncertain economic climate," he says.

# Samba from Rio to Venice with MSC Cruises

MSC Cruises has unveiled a 22-night package incorporating a 19-day continent-to-continent voyage from Rio de Janeiro to Venice aboard *MSC Musica*.

Commencing March 14, 2012, the package also includes economy class fares with Emirates ex Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth and two nights' accommodation in Rio's Copacabana. It is priced from \$4573 per person (twin share).

The *MSC Musica* voyage will visit Brazilian ports Santos, Ilha Grande and Salvador.

After crossing the Atlantic, the ship will call on Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, as well as Spain's Malaga, Palma in the Balearic Islands and Malta's Valletta before reaching Venice.

"It's a holiday of a lifetime at a price well below what you would expect to pay if you stayed in each of the ports," said MSC Cruises managing director for Australia and New Zealand Lynne Clarke.

"This package is sure to arouse much interest among Australian cruise fans."



Also included in the price are transfers, port charges, airport taxes and fuel charges.

Tour duration for travellers from Melbourne and Brisbane is 23 days due

to return flight arrival the next day.

With all MSC cruises, children under 18 years cruise free (apart from port charges) when they share a cabin with two adults.

## Cruise Traveller offers agents 13-night cruise prize

TRAVEL agents booking cruises from the 2012 program of "Voyages to Antiquity" will be in line to win a 13-night Greece and Turkey package including a nine-night cruise aboard *Aegean Odyssey*.

Cruise Traveller, the specialist cruise wholesaler that markets the "Voyages to Antiquity" cruises to historic Mediterranean locations aboard *Aegean Odyssey*, says agents do not have to register to be eligible to win the prize.

"To qualify, simply make bookings on any 2012 sailing through "Voyages to Antiquity" and make your booking with Cruise Traveller by November 30, 2011 to be in the running," the company advises.

"The agent who has sold the highest dollar value from 2012 sailings on "Voyages to Antiquity" will be the winner, to be announced in December 2011. Any 2012 bookings previously made will count towards your total."

The prize for the winning agent and partner includes free return economy flights from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth, two nights pre-cruise stay in Istanbul, an all-inclusive nine-night cruise sailing around Turkey and Greece and two-nights post-cruise stay in Athens.

The cruise component showcases the sort of experience provided by "Voyages to Antiquity".

Departing Istanbul on April 23, the cruise includes selected wine with every dinner, gratuities and port charges.

Terminating in Athens, "the unique cruise takes you through the history, art and architecture of some spectacular destinations including: Istanbul, Lemnos, Skiathos, Izmir, Delos, Mykonos, stunning Santorini, Rethimnon, Crete, Nauplia", Cruise Traveller says.

The wholesaler adds that the cruise will enable the winning agent and partner to "immerse themselves in each destination with on-board lectures, guest speakers, a comprehensive library and the option of expertly guided tours".

## International Cruise Council adds Euro river cruising, fleet review to agent training modules

THE International Cruise Council of Australasia (ICCA) continues to work on the "huge project" of developing new training modules for travel agents, said the council's general manager Brett Jardine.

"We have recently released a new Europe River Cruising module that has been very well received by agents and are presently working on an ICCA Fleet Review for release in early 2012," he said.

"That module will be designed to help agents understand and identify how different ships are categorised to ensure they are armed with the right information to qualify their clients."

In recent years, ICCA has been developing its back office systems to handle the expansion of training and consultant profiles, Jardine said.

He said ICCA membership continued to grow steadily with good support from all retail

chains and attendance levels at ICCA training sessions around Australia and New Zealand remain strong.

"As we move into 2012 we do so with the pillars of what we do (training, statistics, events, awareness) in excellent shape so we are in a strong position to evolve further as the representative body for the cruise industry," Jardine told *travelBulletin*.

Meanwhile ICCA chairman Gavin Smith (Royal Caribbean) has revealed moves that are expected to see the next phase of ICCA's evolution result in the adoption of an industry spokesperson role, providing a unified industry voice on key issues, such as infrastructure, that affect cruising in Australia. (See story, page 6)

■ The increasing number of non-cruise organisations signing up as ICCA associate members reflects the growing recognition by government tourism organisations, airlines

and other travel companies of the volume of business now being generated by the cruise industry. While Tourism Australia is a notable absentee, the council's 16 associate members include six tourist bureaux – Tourism New Zealand, Singapore Tourism Board, Alaska Travel Industry Association, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Monaco Government Tourist Office and South African Tourism.

There are also three airlines (Air New Zealand, Emirates and Virgin Australia) while other travel-related companies include Amadeus, CruiseAgents, Harveys Choice Cruise, Rocky Mountaineer, Sabre Pacific, Specialised South Africa and Travelvax.

"Engagement with industry partners is certainly important and we appreciate where organisations external to the cruise industry are making a valued contribution. We are a broad church and are open to further support," said Jardine.



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■ **CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES** has announced an upgrade sale for guests sailing on *Carnival Spirit* ex Sydney and Melbourne from October 2012.

Up until November 30, 2011, passengers can upgrade from an "Ocean View" cabin to a balcony cabin from \$99 to \$198 per person depending on the category.

Announcing the deal, Carnival said the balcony upgrade deal offers passengers savings of up to \$600 off published balcony price.

To help promote the sale, Carnival Cruise Lines is offering travel agents a bonus cruise sale for their guests to receive additional onboard credit and reduced deposits. Agents can visit [www.myccs.com.au](http://www.myccs.com.au) to sign up for a select sailing.

■ **FRENCH TRAVEL CONNECTION** has launched luxury private catamaran charters along the French Riviera. The seven-night charters will operate from June to September 2012, taking groups of up to six friends or family members. Beginning in Nice, the journeys include Monaco, Antibes, the islands of Iles de Lérins (including St Marguerite and St Honorat), St Raphael and Cannes. Prices for a full charter start from \$10,339, plus marina and mooring fees of about \$110-\$140 per night for up to six passengers for seven nights.

## APT's sightseeing options cater to diverse interests

APT has launched its 2012 Europe River Cruising touring program, claiming to offer "the widest range of sightseeing" compared to any other operator.

The company says its "Freedom of Choice" sightseeing programs, offered alongside included onshore excursions and "Signature Experiences", recognise that different passengers have different interests.

The range of tours on offer caters for interests including food and drink, technology, history, art, architecture and sport.

Sightseeing options geared for the more adventurous include guided cycling tours, indoor cross-country skiing, canoe and kayak experiences and guided Vespa tours around Florence.

Meanwhile, joining the APT Europe river cruising fleet in 2012 is *Amacerto*, the latest addition to the operator's Concerto Class family of ships featuring twin balcony suites designed by the company in partnership with AmaWaterways.

APT, which now has a fleet of 10 river cruising vessels in Europe, points out that it took off two awards at the most recent Cruise Passenger



APT's Amabella river cruising in Europe

Magazine Readers' Choice Awards – for Best River Cruise Operator and Best River Cruise Ship.

The company says its new 2012 Europe cruise itineraries will bring its passengers the highlights of three of Europe's great rivers – the Rhine, the Rhône and the Moselle.

"Only with APT can you cruise all three in the same extraordinary journey in 2012," the company claims.

■ APT has expanded its Mekong River cruising operation with the addition of Upper Mekong options to the Lower Mekong offerings it has already developed.

"APT has combined its lower Mekong cruising with an adventurous six-day cruise exploring Laos' breathtaking mountainous scenery of lush forests and rock formations aboard the boutique *Mekong Sun*," the operator has announced.

APT has added Thailand to its river cruise program, with Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai in its 26-day "Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand Discovery" that ends in Bangkok.

■ APT says it has partnered with Coral Princess Cruises to provide "exclusive" Kimberley cruises aboard *Oceanic Discoverer* and *Coral Princess*.

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\*Conditions: Prices are per person based on twin share accommodation. **Classic Round Voyage** is valid for sale until 31 Dec 2012. The advertised price is based on departures 01 Jan – 31 Mar & 01 Nov – 31 Dec 2012, based on I grade cabin and inclusive of fuel surcharge. **Follow the Lights** is valid for sale until 21 Dec 2012. The advertised price is based on travel 01 Jan – 09 Mar 2012, based on 12 days tourist class package with N grade cabin, ex-Helsinki. Prices are subject to change. Standard Bentours Terms and Conditions apply. Tempo Holidays trading as Bentours International A.B.N. 51007331213 License No 2TA08293

# RCI promises families one Shrek of a holiday aboard Voyager

DREAMWORKS characters such as Shrek and Po of "Kung Fu Panda" will be mingling with passengers aboard *Voyager of the Seas* during the mega cruise liner's Australian season in 2012/13.

*Voyager of the Seas* will become the fifth Royal Caribbean International (RCI) ship to carry the "DreamWorks Experience" according to a joint announcement earlier this month by DreamWorks Animation and RCI's parent, Royal Caribbean Cruises.

It came at a press conference in Shanghai, presided over by RCI president and chief executive officer Adam Goldstein, and DreamWorks Animation president and chief financial officer Lew Coleman.

Po and Shrek, who were on hand at the press conference, will be two of the "celebrity" characters that will engage *Voyager of the Seas* passengers with "exclusive special events and parades, interactive character breakfasts in the main dining room and plenty of photo opportunities", according to the announcement.

First launched aboard RCI's *Allure of the Seas* in November 2010, the



The DreamWorks Experience will be part of *Voyager of the Seas* 2012/13 Australian cruise program.

DreamWorks Experience has been incorporated onto *Oasis of the Seas*, *Freedom of the Seas* and *Liberty of the Seas*, and features characters from some of the studio's most popular animated films - "Kung Fu Panda," "Shrek," "Madagascar" and "How to Train Your Dragon".

The DreamWorks Experience will

be available to *Voyager of the Seas* passengers at the start of the ship's summer 2012 Asia season and throughout the 2012/13 Australia-New Zealand season.

"Expanding the DreamWorks Experience to *Voyager of the Seas* further illustrates our commitment to Australia, New Zealand, China

and their surrounding regions," said Goldstein. "This is really going to set us apart in the region as an international cruise line that delivers the very best in family entertainment for vacationers around the world."

Said Coleman: "At DreamWorks Animation we are always looking for new and expanded opportunities for our fans and for families in particular to interact with our characters and our brand. ... We very much look forward to extending our entertainment offering in Australia, New Zealand and Asia."

*Voyager of the Seas*, described by RCI as "the largest and most amenity-filled cruise ship to sail in Australia, New Zealand and Asia" is scheduled to begin her inaugural Australian season on November 5, 2012 in Perth, followed by sailings from Sydney, on a program of 14 to 18-night cruises in the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia.

Prior to her arrival in Australia, *Voyager of the Seas* will sail on a series of three to eight-night Asia cruises commencing May 26, 2012, ex Singapore followed by sailings from Shanghai (Baoshan) and Tianjin in China.



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# Two more 'longships' for Viking River Cruises in 2012

VIKING River Cruises has ordered two more "Longships" for delivery in 2012, bringing the total of new vessels to six.

"This announcement marks an unprecedented number of ships launching in a single season, an accomplishment that eclipses Viking's own record of four ships christened into the fleet in 2001," the company's announcement stated.

Viking's chairman and chief executive Torstein Hagen said the development followed an "overwhelming" response to the announcement earlier this year that the river cruise company planned to introduce four "longships" in 2012.

"To accommodate the demand, we have decided to accelerate the new builds schedule," he said.

The two new ships are part of the company's \$US250 million fleet development program, comprised of several complete refurbishments plus the introduction of 10 new Viking Longships by 2014.

The two new state-of-the-art ships—*Viking Embla* and *Viking Aegir*—will make their debut in July and August 2012, respectively, joining sister ships



Longship Aquavit lounge

– *Viking Freya*, *Viking Idun*, *Viking Njord* and *Viking Odin* – to be christened in March 2012.

The company claims its "longship" vessels create additional space and a variety of stateroom choices with a design that shifts the corridor one metre and re-orientates the state rooms.

"The result is the largest real suites in Europe – featuring separate sleeping and living rooms in each of its Explorer Suites and Veranda Suites – as well

as more full-size rooms and full-size verandas than other European river cruise vessels. Plus, three-quarters of staterooms will feature a veranda, French balcony or both," a company statement claims.

The "longships" will be 443 feet long, with 95 staterooms per ship.

They will have two "Explorer" suites, claimed by the company to be "the largest river cruise suites in Europe at 445 square feet".

Seven 275-square-foot "Veranda Suites" will have a full-size veranda in the living room and a French balcony in the bedroom; 39 "Veranda State-rooms" will have full-size verandas, each at 205 square feet.

A new all-weather indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace will feature retractable "floor to ceiling glass doors while alfresco dining areas on the upper deck, adjacent to the lounge will present more dining choices to guests.

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25 Apr	Istanbul (Optional Bosphorus boat tour. Embark <i>Aegean Odyssey</i> )
	GREECE
26 Apr	Lemnos (Sea of Marmara, Dardanelles, Lemnos: Myrina)
27 Apr	Cruise past Mount Athos
27 Apr	Skiathos
	TURKEY
28 Apr	Izmir (Ephesus)
29 Apr	Izmir (Pergamon, Altar of Zeus, Greek theatre)
	GREECE
30 Apr	Delos (Sanctuary of Apollo, Avenue of the Lions, Sacred Harbour)
30 Apr	Mykonos
1 May	Santorini, (Akrotiri, Fira)
2 May	Rethimnon, Crete (Knossos, Chania, Rethimnon)
3 May	Nauplia (Mycenae, Nauplia or Epidaurus)
4 May	Athens (Disembark <i>Aegean Odyssey</i> . Acropolis)
5-6 May	Athens

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\*CONDITIONS OF ENTRY: The winner will be the individual travel agent who has sold the highest dollar value in 2012 sailings on Voyages to Antiquity booked through Cruise Traveller. Competition closes 30 November 2011. Applicable to all travel agent bookings. Winner will be announced in December 2011. Prize must be taken on 23 April 2012 sailing. Includes return economy flights. Winner can fly from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth. Prize is not transferrable and cannot be sold on to a third party or redeemed for cash. To be eligible you must be the employee of a licensed travel agent in Australia at the time the prize is drawn. Items of a personal nature not included. Voyages To Antiquity and Cruise Traveller reserve the right to change and/or correct errors.

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## CIC targets MICE market for Athena sailings

FREE room hire, company logos carved in ice and daily newsletters for delegates are among the lures for businesses to hold meetings and conferences at sea aboard Classic International Cruises' *Athena*, in Australia this summer.

Conference, meeting and product launch packages also include dedicated use of *Athena's* 260-seat auditorium, free use of video equipment, morning and afternoon tea, cocktail functions, and free banner display.

Releasing details of its MICE packages, CIC said the 600-passenger *Athena* is "ideally suited to charters, conferences, corporate meetings or incentive groups.

With auditoriums, restaurants and lounges that can accommodate 260 delegates *Athena*, a former trans-Atlantic liner, will offer 15 cruises ex Fremantle and Adelaide between November 2011 to April 2012.

The corporate packages can be used on any of them including a range of short cruises from two to five nights that would suit meetings and conferences at sea, according to CIC. "A cruise provides an ideal venue for a successful, exciting and affordable conference or product launch," said CIC managing director Grant Hunter.

## Many highlights in Silversea's 2012 program

SILVERSEA'S full-colour, 200-page 2012 Voyage Atlas details over 200 itineraries exploring seven continents, over 100 countries, and more than 450 destinations.

New for 2012 is a pricing summary booklet inserted into the back cover pocket – plus there is a Microsoft Tag 2D bar code on the brochure's back cover that enables smartphone users to view "The World of Silversea", a video depicting the Silversea experience.

Highlights of the 2012 program include three new West African cruises aboard Silversea's expedition ship *Silver Explorer* which has proven particularly popular in this country with Australians forming a high percentage of the ship's total passengers.

Another highlight of the 2012 program is *Silver Whisper's* first world cruise – a 115-day itinerary beginning in Fort Lauderdale on January 6 and visiting 45 ports in 27 countries en route to Monte Carlo.

The Singapore to Monte Carlo sector is available as a 59-day "Grand Voyage" departing Singapore March 3, 2012.

All-inclusive cruise-only fares for the Singapore-Monte Carlo voyage



start from \$35,608 per person, double occupancy with an onboard spending credit of \$US2500 per suite. Shorter sectors are available.

Passengers will be able to attend lectures by celebrated author Bill Bryson who will be aboard the ship between Singapore and Shanghai.

High-profile lecturers will also form an important component of *Silver Shadow's* 2011/12 Australia and New Zealand summer cruise program.

For example, culinary expert Maggie Beer will be a guest lecturer aboard the

19-night Auckland to Fremantle cruise departing February 4.

Other lecturers on this voyage will be hostage negotiator and humanitarian Terry Waite and historian and world affairs expert Philip Hurst.

Fares for this cruise are from \$11,150 per person, double occupancy.

After spending the Australian summer in our waters, *Silver Shadow* will be Alaska-bound for a series of cruises on which Silversea is offering "Passport to Luxury" onboard spending credits of up to \$US1000 per suite.

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# Bentours adds Argentina highlights to Antarctica cruise

BENTOURS has launched its 2012/13 Antarctica brochure featuring eight voyages through the great white continent, including a new itinerary which takes in a selection of Argentina's highlights.

The new 19-day "Classical Antarctica and Argentina" package includes a tour of Buenos Aires and a visit to Iguazu Falls before boarding *MS Expedition* for a 12-day voyage to Antarctica.

The voyage crosses the Drake Passage to the South Shetland Islands and on

to the Antarctic Peninsula where, weather permitting, passengers will go ashore twice a day to observe penguin rookeries and encounter seals.

"The brochure contains a range of exhilarating voyages taking in the dramatic scenery and unique wildlife of the world's last great wilderness," Bentours business head Jeremy Hearst said. "The past year has brought some significant changes to Antarctic tourism, with many large cruise ships no longer allowed in Antarctic waters

due to stringent new regulations. This has led to a dramatic increase in the demand for cruises on smaller vessels, so we strongly recommend booking early to ensure clients secure the voyage and cabin they want."

Large cruise ships carrying heavy fuel oil have been banned from operating in Antarctic waters to help protect the continent's fragile environment but Bentours' Antarctic cruises, operated by Hurtigruten and Gap Adventures, are not affected.

Bentours' most popular Antarctic cruises have returned for 2012/13 including the 11-day "Antarctica Classic" which focuses on the South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula. Others include the 14-day "Quest for the Antarctic Circle" which makes a rare journey inside the polar circle; the 19-day "In the Realm of the Great Explorers"; and the 20-day "Spirit of Shackleton".

The brochure also features two Latin America extensions.

## Oceania Cruises new-builds target 'upper premium' market

OCEANIA Cruises says its new ship *Riviera* – launching in April 2012 – will have 625 staterooms that "are among the most spacious at sea".

*Riviera* and her sister ship *Marina*, launched in January this year, are the first vessels that Oceania has built from scratch and they are larger than the line's three other vessels (*Insignia*, *Nautica* and *Regatta*) which were originally built for the now-defunct Renaissance Cruises.

From April 14 to November 29, 2012, *Riviera* will offer a program of 13 Mediterranean

itineraries on a total of 21 voyages, calling on ports in France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Turkey as well as Israel, Croatia, Cyprus, Montenegro, Morocco and Monaco.

The company says *Riviera* will offer "custom-crafted accommodations that are reminiscent of an elegantly appointed private residence".

Veranda and Concierge level staterooms on *Riviera* are a spacious 282 square feet, featuring a sitting area and balcony furnished with a chaise lounge, armchair and occasional table.

"*Riviera* and *Marina* have been designed specifically for the upper-premium market," stated Oceania Cruises' president Bruce J Himelstein.

In addition to the staterooms, accommodation includes 420 square feet Penthouse suites with living/dining room separate from the sleeping area, walk-in wardrobes and bathrooms with a double vanity.

Oceania suites are 1030 square feet comprising a living and dining area, media room and separate bedroom. The large veranda

features a hot tub and flat-panel TV.

Vista suites range from 1200 to 1500 square feet and offer the same features as *Oceania* suites plus floor-to-ceiling windows.

Owner's suites offer 2000-plus square feet and are completely appointed from furniture and fabrics to lighting and bedding using the Ralph Lauren Home collection.

"Guests (in Owner's suites) universally say 'wow' upon entering the foyer, with its baby grand piano, wet bar, domed ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows," claimed Himelstein.



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