

Winter Newsletter

June

Flying Colours News:

Inside this issue:

- Ky's FNQ Experience 2
- Melbourne Cruise s 3
- Kirstens River Cruise 4
- Paris Accommodation 5
- Europe Details 5
- Gippsland Departures 6
- Paklite Specails 6

We are almost half way through the year and I feel that we have only just finished celebrating Christmas. Kirsten and Ky have both recently been away and have some information to share with you about their adventures.

We have a few special dates you may like to make note of with regards to information sessions we have coming up. These give you a fantastic opportunity to speak to the operator direct and find out the latest deals that they have available.

I was lucky enough to travel to Europe in May, and was joined by Vonnie Lay, whom many of you may know. Avalon Waterways invited me to the Christening of their new "Panarama" Rivercruise ship. It certainly was a fantastic experience with the Godmother of the ship being Lisa Wilkinson. I have some photos and details on page 4 for you to read through.

Our Aussie dollar is still at record highs and due to this we are seeing the demand for International Travel increase. The value for money that we are getting from our Aus-sie dollar makes just about anywhere in the world good value.

I was extremely surprised with the cost of living whilst in Paris, in the past we have know Paris to be an expensive city. With our dollar buying so well again the Euro and the fact that the European cost of living doesn't appear to have increased at the rate ours here in Australia has, it makes for a very pleasant surprise for the day to day living costs.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter and look forward to assisting you with any queries in the future.

INFORMATION NIGHTS:

CELEBRITY CRUISE

21TH JULY

AUSTRALIAN PACIFIC TOURS

14TH JULY

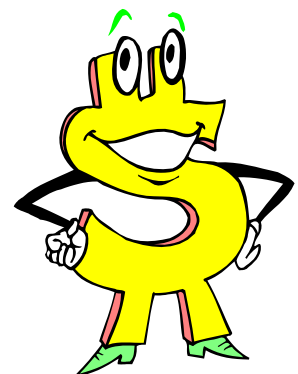
**CALL US TO
REGISTAR**

Early Bird Deals

Already we have received the Early Bird deals for European River Cruises and the new Canada/Alaska

Programs. Take advantage of these great deals and book early to secure the best price possible for your 2012 travel.

Fly Free offers are available with a lot of these packages although they are subject to availability. So be sure not to miss these great deals and enquiry now to avoid disappointment.



Ky's Far North Queensland Experience

Where else better to go to get out of the cold Victorian chill than Far North Queensland? I had the honour of representing the agency at The Sunlover Stars in mid-May for 5 days. A rewards program to celebrate the high achievers for the Sunlover Holidays wholesaler.

Day 1 of the reward started at our accommodation The Sea Temple Resort and Spa in Palm Cove. A 5 star property managed by Mirvac hotels and resorts. A resort and spa housing a combination of studios, 1-3 bedroom apartments and Penthouse suites.

The apartments are suitable for families-some 2 bedroom apartments offering direct pool access. The penthouse suites also feature a rooftop bbq and spa areas. The Sea Temple has a Bali or Asian kind of atmosphere without the hours and hours of travel.

Palm Cove is only 25 minutes north away from the Cairns airport and 35 minutes south from Port Douglas. Palm Cove, Cairns and Port Douglas are great locations to access the Great Barrier Reef, the World Heritage Listed Daintree Rainforest and Cape Tribulation. There's another Sea Temple Resort and Spa in Port Douglas also.

Kuranda Scenic Railway and the Rainforest Station tied up our afternoon and evening. The beautiful scenery overlooking Cairns, views from up to 328m above sea level. Passing through 15 tunnels and passing by Stoney Creek Falls. The KSR Gold class gives the extra touch for an unforgettable memory.

Day 2 adventures brought us to beautiful Port Douglas, the closest town out to the reef. Quicksilver tour daily out to the reef and dock onto the strategically placed pontoons. Opportunities for maximum of 140 guests to snorkel and scuba the wonders of the deep. For those who don't want to get wet an underwater glass bottom boat has up close views of the reef.

After a full day out on the reef the day winds up with dinner and a show at The Australian Mustering Experience. It borders the Daintree Rainforest in Whyanbeel Valley. Wide open spaces overlooking views out to the furthest point of Port Douglas. Viewing platforms are nice and close to the arena and the rustic bush feel will make you feel like you're not in Tropical Far North Queensland.

Day 3 featured Hartleys Crocodile Adventures. An attraction for the kids (even the big ones too). A highly educational experience without them even knowing. You have the opportunity to get up close and personal with the reptiles on a croc spotting cruise. Feeding shows operate daily where you can catch the crocs 'snap' a feed. Or a licensed eatery to grab a feed for yourself after a hard days hunting.

Our final full day in Tropical North Queensland was spent heading up to Cooktown. Driving through, where 2 World Heritage listed locations butt up right next to each other- Cape Tribulation and the Daintree Rainforest. If you're an avid 4WD enthusiast, the coastal drive to Cooktown is unsealed and recommended for 4WD's. November through to June is the wet season which can be closed during these times. Oz Tours Safaris and APT can drive you through the rugged terrain in the purpose built vehicles.

Cooktown is small historic town, named after Captain James Cook. A beautiful museum even holds the original anchor from The Endeavour. There are a few accommodation options to choose from. However if you're after a 5 star resort with a 24 hour room service, Cooktown is probably not for you.

Far North Queensland is a great location for all ages of the family. Jetstar, Virgin Blue and Qantas all have direct flights to Cairns daily.



River Cruising...



**Above:
Navigating a Loch
Danube Canal**

**Below:
Melk Abby**



River cruising is still as popular as ever and in March I had my first taste of the European river system on board APT's beautiful Amabella cruise ship.

Arriving in Budapest we were greeted by the Captain and staff aboard the ship, docked right in the heart of the city—The Parliament building on one side, Castle District on the other.

A welcome drink and the first of many delicious meals (and extra kilos) made for a wonderful first night. One of the highlights of the trip was a morning visit to the Hungarian Opera House, an incredible old building that concluded with an APT

Signature Experience of a Private Opera recital. Staged on a mezzanine above the marble suitcase, not having a great appreciation of opera, even I had goosebumps.

Another wonderful aspect of cruising holidays is departing one city and awaking the next - our second day began in Bratislava, our third we awoke in Vienna for a tour of Schonbrunn Palace and traditional Apple Strudel.

Along the length of the Danube and Main-Danube Canal there are numerous locks along the way. When cruising along it's hard to believe that not only was a portion of the River man made, but that a ship can fit in with only millimeters on each side. I must admit that before we had navigated a lock that I thought being a ship Captain couldn't be that hard. Then we went through a lock. Maybe it's harder than it looks.

With some spare time in Vienna those who wish to see the famous horses may be in luck if there is a performance or training in progress. These shows are extremely popular and if you are in Vienna or planning to go make sure you book early to avoid disappointment.

From Vienna to via Durnstein, Linz (with the option of tours to Salzburg—Home of the Sound of Music or Czesky Krumlov—a walled medieval city in the Czech Republic), to Passau, Regensburg and our final stop Nuremberg.

It was very easy to get used to this style of cruising, sitting up on the sundeck with a glass of wine watching old villages and towns as you pass by.

If you are after a slightly different stopover destination, I can highly recommend Doha. The Capital of Qatar and the host of the 2022 Soccer World Cup, Doha is growing at a rapid rate. A mix of the old and the new, shopping centres down the road from traditional souq markets, desert Bedouin camps, 5 star resorts, dune safaris and camel rides it was worth the 2 night stopover.

The cruising season is still going for 2011 and if you are interested there may be some availability left.

Just about all cruising companies have released their 2012 River Cruising programs with applicable Earlybird deals including 'Fly Free' offers as well as per couple savings. Conditions Apply.

Qatar Airlines flies direct from Melbourne to over 90 destinations across the globe including Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Looking for something special ??

Recently whilst in Europe I had the pleasure of staying at a beautiful hotel in the center of Paris called "Hotel Lotti". This hotel has a very traditional "French Feel" about it with antiques and heavily embossed wallpaper and drapes. The rooms are large by European Standards and the private courtyard area is a beautiful place to relax for a casual meal or glass of wine after exploring all that Paris has to offer.

Another of our favorite hotels is the Duminy Vendome, we like to make sure we keep ourselves current with the hotels we recommend and I was pleased to see that the Duminy Vendome is keeping up to date. They were having renovations in the bar area of the hotel when I inspected it but the rooms were all very nice and once again by European Standards quite large. Once again its all about the location and you certainly cannot go wrong at this hotel.

Paris is such a large city that sometimes its worth paying the little extra to get the "Location, Location, Location" and both of the above hotels certainly offer you that.



Foyer Lotti Hotel Paris

Travel within Europe

It was great to experience train travel within Europe recently. We travelled from Amsterdam to Paris by the Thyalls train. What a fantastic experience. From the centre of Amsterdam to the center of Paris in under 3 1/2 hours.

With airport security and procedures taking longer and longer, train travel within Europe is certainly the way to go. With most trains running to schedule and offering very good value for money. There are many different types of Passes that you can take advantage of depending on where you plan to travel.

There are plenty of English speaking staff to assist you with anything you are unsure of. The service on the trains is excellent and trains very clean. The first class rail passes that we can purchase from Australia are well and truly worth it, at some stations they even have a first class lounge that you can wait in and have complimentary refreshments.



Eiffel Tower from a different View.

PANARAMA CHRISTENING CRUISE:

I had the pleasure of being invited to Europe for the Avalon Panarama Christening Cruise in May. This new 5 star River Cruise ship was delightful to experience. The "God Mother" of the ship was Lisa Wilkinson and the Christening took place on a damp afternoon, all went without a hitch and the Champagne Bottle broke as required.

Without a doubt River Cruising is growing in interest and popularity not only in Europe but Indochina, South America and China. The fact that you only have to unpack once and if you don't want to make that Early wakeup call you don't have too. Certainly a great way to experience some of the amazing rivers we have throughout the world.

Right: Lisa getting ready to cut to rope for the Panarama Christening.



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We have lots of Fantastic Cruise
deals available throughout the
world. A great place to check out
what specials are available if you
have some spare time.

KIRRA TOURS:

In late July, Kirra Tours will be
bringing a new Motorhome to Sale
for our clients to have a look over
as an option for when travelling to
New Zealand. Contact our office
for further information if you are
interested in having a look .

We hope to have our next Gippsland Departures brochure out very soon.
2012 will see some exciting trips available. If you would like more infor-
mation please do not hesitate to contact our office.

FEBRUARY Round New Zealand Cruise

MARCH Round Australia Cruise

MARCH Grand pacific Tour—New Zealand

APRIL Rhapsody of the Seas—Sydney to Honolulu

APRIL South Africa 23 day tour.

MAY Europe River Cruise APT

MAY Canada and Alaska Tour

AUGUST Indian Pacific Rail with Margaret River

SEPTEMBER Avalan Waterways Europe River Cruise

OCTOBER Azamara Greek island Cruise

Call us for further information on any of the above.

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