

Destination MEDCRUISE

QUARTERLY SEPTEMBER 2007

ISSUE 17

Via Sochi

Sochi's winning Olympic bid



Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi has been awarded the 2014 Winter Olympics. The MedCruise member port, which hosted the association's general assembly in May, will be the venue for some of the indoor winter sports events whilst the rest of the Games will be centred in the snow-covered mountains at Krasnaya Polyana (pictured), an hour's drive away.

'For those of us who were in Sochi for our General Assembly in May, this is especially good news, as we had the pleasure to meet the officials responsible for the Olympic bid, including Mayor Kolodyazhny and Mr. Minaev, who sponsored both of our gala dinners, and the Olympic Committee of the Russian Federation, who invited us to the Caucasus mountain ski resort, Krasnaya Polyana, the site of the 2014 Winter Olympics!' remarks MedCruise president Laurent Monsaigneon.

The mayor of Sochi, Victor Kolodyazhny, told delegates at the May MedCruise meeting that \$13bn has been invested in the local economy in the past five years with further funding of \$10bn earmarked if the Olympic bid was successful.

Part of the redevelopment plans include a master plan to extend the cruise facilities in Sochi, including a new marina and new passenger terminal plus a new 2km long quay projecting out into the sea, noted Sochi port director, David Stupelman.

Grigory Minaev, head of the transport and communications department of the Krasnodar Region, confirmed that the project is being studied by the Russian Ministry of Transport. 'We hope to go out to tender next year with completion by 2014,' he noted.

Sochi, Russia's leading resort offers an unprecedented combination of Alpine and Mediterranean climates within a radius of 50 kilometres. For this reason, it is growing rapidly as a cruise destination with around 40 international cruise ships expected to visit this year. Local travel agency, Sochi Holidays Cruise & Travel Agency, whose main activity is providing shore excursions for lines including Costa, Silversea, Holland America Line, Oceania, Hapag Lloyd, P&O, Noble Caledonia and Saga organised shorex tours for more than 7,000 cruise passengers last year.

Things to know about Sochi

- 1) It is the largest resort in Russia
- 2) On the map it is at the same latitude as Toronto, Nice and the Gobi Desert
- 3) Situated between the Caucasian Mountains and the Black Sea, Sochi enjoys the most northern subtropical climate on earth.
- 4) Mount Elbrus (5,642mtr), in the Russian Caucasus, is the highest mountain in Europe
- 5) Sochi normally has 200 sunny days a year. Average summer temperature in +26° and 9° in winter.
- 6) 400,000 people live in Sochi representing over 100 nationalities
- 7) Sochi has over 200,000 hectares of forest and 30 botanical gardens and parks housing over 30,000 plant species.





Via Dubrovnik

Jewel of the Adriatic

The raw beauty of Croatia is displayed to perfection at the Southern port of Dubrovnik – often referred to as ‘the jewel of the Adriatic’.

The bustling old city offers tourists surroundings virtually unchanged since their construction in the 13th century. A stroll along the main street, the Stradun, brings visitors in contact with monuments such as

the Onofrio Fountain, the Orlando Column, the city museum – previously the Rector's Palace, as well as one of Europe's oldest functioning pharmacies, in operation since 1391.

Early risers have the option of bartering for a bargain at the morning market in the Gunduliceva Poljana square or travelling 20kms to the Konavle region for horse back riding. Those of a slower pace can stop to

indulge themselves at a number of street café's under the tranquil gaze of the city patron, St. Blaise, known to locals as Sveti Vlaho. It is also easy to arrange an excursion to Dubrovnik's three neighbouring islands – Ipan, Lopud and Kolocep.

The city has a strong cultural component, with the world-renowned



Dubrovnik Summer Festival featuring music, theatre and dance performances during the summer months and the Dubrovnik International Film Festival that runs for several days at the beginning of October.

The port expects to boost its visitors from its current 600,000 passengers off 500 vessel calls with the construction of a new facility able to accommodate three large vessels by 2008 as well as a new cruise terminal, scheduled for completion in 2010.

Via Zadar

Past and present



The fifth largest city in Croatia, Zadar, has seen 100 cruise calls over the past year, a 15% increase on 2006. In fact, the cruise season at the port has been extended by a month and now runs from February to December.

This is hardly surprising since the attractions of a 3,000-year old city and its five surrounding national parks draw visitors from

across the world. The city offers tourists impressions of the past and present juxtaposed against each other, with ancient walls (some of which date back to Roman times) and city gates surrounding the more modern churches and monasteries that are scattered about the landscape.

The decision by the Austrian rulers in 1873 to convert Zadar's Venetian reinforced ramparts into elevated

promenades that command extensive views landward as well as out to sea allow visitors any number of photographic opportunities. Landmarks include the Roman Forum (founded by the first Roman Emperor Augustus in the 3rd century), the remains of a Roman aqueduct visible outside the ramparts, and the large number of beautiful churches – one of which, St. Donatus', contains some of the finest Dalmatian metalwork. Visitors can also arrange for excursions to the beautiful Plitvice Lakes, the breathtaking Krka Waterfalls and the nearby Kornati islands.

A recent addition to the port is the new quay for cruise vessels that boasts a “Sea Organ” – several stairs descending into the sea. The steps, situated 30m away from the new port allow visitors to sit back and enjoy the stunning views with the advantage of a cooling sea breeze.

The port of Zadar also expects to start work on a new passenger terminal catering to large cruise ships in Galencia, just two miles from the old town. Construction on the project is expected to begin by the end of this year and is scheduled for completion by 2010.



Via Cyprus ports

Museums galore

The favourable weather conditions in Cyprus make Lemesos the ideal cruise destination all year round. Although the bulk of calls occur between April and October, there are also a significant number of vessels calling at the port in the first three months of the year and in November.

The port, which can accommodate even the larger cruise ships, has announced that it will build a new passenger terminal that will be operational by 2011 and cater to the consistent increases in passenger throughput. According to the scheduled timetable for vessels calling at the port, it should see a 10% increase in the number of visitors this year as well.

Lemesos' proximity to a large number of scenic historical destinations allows the town to serve as a base from which tourists can travel to local landmarks. History lovers must visit the Cyprus Medieval Museum that is located near the old port. The structure, built

on the site of an earlier Byzantine castle, dates back to the 14th century and is said to be the place where Richard the Lion-Heart married Berengaria of Navarre and crowned her Queen of England in 1191. The nearby Kolossi Castle is also a treat as it served as the Grand Commandery of the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and subsequently came under the domain of the Knights Templar.

There are a number of museums only a short drive away from the port including the Lemesos District Archaeological Museum that displays antiquities found in the area dating from the Neolithic Age to the Roman period. The nearby Kourion Museum displays a collection of finds from nearby archaeological sites.

Kourion itself is one of the most spectacular archaeological sites on the island, featuring a magnificent 2nd century Greco-Roman Theatre (still in use for musical and theatre performances), and the impressive mosaics and architecture at the House of Eustolios – originally a private Roman villa. Beautiful mosaics depicting scenes from Greek mythology can also be seen on the



floors at Kato Pafos – an area named for the magnificent underground, carved rock royal tombs.

For tourists who prefer to indulge their discerning palates, the area of Krasochoria, meaning 'wine villages,' is found on the south side of the Troodos range. Traditions are kept alive in these villages, where wine making is still the main occupation. The area produces famous dry red wines such as Omodos, Arsos, Vasa and Koilani.

The newest excursion offered at Lemesos is a safari round of the Akamas peninsula, which is a national park known for its unspoiled beauty, wildlife and plants.

Via Sete

300 days of sun

Sète sits like a pearl between the Mediterranean Sea and the Etang de Thau, famous for its oysters. It is separated from Cap d'Agde by 12 kilometres of fine sandy beaches.

Sète has retained all the character of its port, which lies in the heart of town. All year round, you can see the daily comings and goings of the trawlers, followed by crowds of gulls, and watch the cruise ships coming into port for a stopover.

Sète, 'Languedoc's Little Venice', with its typical districts criss-crossed by canals

reflecting the colourful facades on the sun-drenched quays, is both a seaside resort and a busy town whose shops and businesses are open in all seasons.

It's also a centre for gourmets, with an impressive array of local specialities, such as 'bourride', stuffed mussels and squid, 'rouille de seiche', 'tielles', oysters and other types of seafood.

It's a festive place, hosting all the great traditional events of the summer: Saint Peter's Day for the fishermen, Saint Louis for the jousts and a whole host of convivial activities, entertainments and local markets throughout the year.

Sète, capital of the Pays de Thau, bathed in 300 days of sunshine a year, is the ideal point of departure for exploring Languedoc-Roussillon's best-known places of interest.

Ships up to 219mtr in length can be accommodated at Quai d'Alger, near the town centre whilst Colbert Dock can handle vessels with a maximum length of 240mtr. There is also a secure anchorage in the harbour for larger vessels which can

tender passengers, a journey taking 15 minutes. The most popular excursions are the walled city of Carcassonne, Montpellier (day, or half day) and Pezenas (day, or half day).

According to Time Out magazine: 'Montpellier has been transformed from a sleepy university city into the powerhouse of Mediterranean France – and the new darling of the international party set. But it's not all about technology and transformation: Montpellier is an ancient academic city with handsome historic buildings, abundant gardens and an impressively vast central square.'





Via Palermo

Full of church history

Palermo, on the island of Sicily, has almost 200 cruise ship calls a year mostly visiting from the beginning of April through to the end of November. The most popular shore excursions for cruise passengers are sightseeing in Palermo itself, standing in a magnificent position on the edge of

the orange and lemon tree-covered plain called Conca d'Oro.

A tour of the city's cathedrals and ancient sites may include, the beautiful Baroque square known as Quattro Canti. Nearby Piazza Pretoria has a monumental 16th Century Fountain, and Piazza Bellini, has three churches: S. Caterina (16th Century) S. Cataldo (12th Century with a

fine interior, floor and mosaic), and Martorana – a masterpiece of Norman art (1143), with its original bell-tower and splendid mosaics. The cathedral was begun in 1185 but restored continually until the dawn of the 19th century. After admiring the grandiose right-hand wall of the

Cathedral, inside are sculptures and the majestic imperial and royal tombs, including the tomb of Frederic II. Just a short walk away is the huge Palazzo dei Normanni, originally built by the Arabs, with the Royal Apartments and the Palatine Chapel, Palermo's most magnificent monument.

Other interesting places include: the Archaeological Museum, one of Italy's richest and largest, known particularly for the sculptures and carving unearthed at Selinunte; the Sicilian National Gallery (in the magnificent Catalan-Gothic Palazzo Abatellis); the gardens in Villa Flora and the Orto Botanico – one of Europe's most important botanical gardens, founded in 1789.

Several interesting excursions outside Palermo are also possible: the seaside of Mondello, or Bagheria with its 17th-18th century villas; or to Solunto (visiting the ruins and the museum) or Piana degli Albanesi, an Albanian settlement which is famous for its embroidered folk costume. But one place that cannot be missed is Monreale, with its incredible 12th century Cathedral. The magnificent interior is richly decorated with mosaics – a gold mine, full of splendid colours – and the adjacent ancient cloister with the columns and capitals, all different.



Via Trieste

Food lovers paradise

A total of 55,000 passengers will visit Trieste this year on 33 calls and this figure is set to rise again in 2008, estimated to reach 86,000 passengers.

For those calling at the Adriatic port for the first time, the full day traditional historic Trieste excursion by bus is a must. Starting with the Miramare Castle, the summer residence of Maximilian of the Hapsburgs which is now a museum, the tour proceeds to San Giusto Hill where the remains of a Roman forum are juxtaposed with the medieval fortress. At the top of the hill you can get the best views of the city and its harbour.

The cathedral with its wooden ceiling, the Roman Theatre and Risera di San Sabba – the national monument to all Holocaust victims – can all be visited in quick

succession, presenting aspects of Trieste through the ages.

A completely different tour is the 'Sights and Flavours' walking excursion through the Old Town (Citta Vecchia) home to the 'real' Trieste with its artisans, goldsmiths, antique dealers, bookshops, potters, framers and art galleries. Guests can stop at a coffee shop and the half day tour concludes with a traditional lunch at Buffet da Pepi, where pork delicacies are eaten standing up while drinking a cold beer.

For gourmet food lovers an 'Epicurean Trieste' excursion by boat takes guests to the newly renovated historic sea wall. A wine workshop, conducted by a sommelier is offered, concentrating on the white wines of Friuli Venezia Giulia. After, a cooking class is conducted by a local chef, explaining in detail how to prepare traditional Triestino dishes, followed by a

sumptuous lunch.

The most popular tour outside the city is a bus trip to Venice or the white wine region of Collio, within an hour's drive by bus. Bicycle tours through the vineyards stopping off at various cellars for tastings is a lovely way to spend the afternoon. Tours by bus are an option.

As Trieste is a city on a border, it is also possible to visit Lipica in Slovenia which is most famous for the Lipizzaner horses. Guests can ride the horses and watch an equestrian show in the afternoon before returning back to the ship.





Via Cartagena

Shorex to Holy City

Passengers calling at Cartagena, the historic natural port of Spain's Murcia region, are able to take a variety of optional tours in and around the local area. The city, founded in 831, is considered today as a modern, academic, cultural, leisure-based and congress city, with a wide range of shopping centres, boutiques, restaurants and cafes.

Among the broad and varied cultural offer, it is worth visiting the Cathedral, the Almudi Palace, the Episcopal Palace, the Fine Arts and Salzillo Museums, the Julian Romea Theatre and the Casino. All are within a short walking distance from the cruise terminal.

A new shore excursion is Caravaca de la Cruz, the main town located in the northwest region of Murcia. It is an ancient city, with numerous archaeological remains.

In 1998 it was declared a Holy City, making it one of five in the world that along with Santiago de Compostela, Santo Toribio de Liebana, Rome and Jerusalem are able to celebrate the Permanent Jubilee. The Santisima and Vera Cruz Sanctuary, built on a hill dominating the town, is divided into two parts: the walled area, made up of 14 towers, and the sanctuary.

Currently Cartagena has a cruise quay of 344mtr long with a 12mtr draught enabling any size cruise ship to berth. There are plans, however, to extend the pier by about 150mtr providing a berth totalling 500mtr in length which will allow two cruise ships to berth at the same time. The terminal area will also be increased by about 1,500sq mtr.

This year 42,000 passengers are expected to visit on 45 cruise ships.



Via Valencia

Hosts of 2009 America's Cup

Valencia enjoyed huge success as the host of the 32nd America's Cup sailing competition. The event not only provided the stimulus for the complete transformation of the old commercial port, but also attracted an array of luxury ships, such as Silver Whisper and The World. The two ships stayed overnight in the city to witness the final stages of the America's Cup.

The official confirmation that the city will host the sailing

competition again in 2009, along with preliminary regattas in 2008, makes Valencia even more alluring. Likewise the arrival of the annual Formula One Grand Prix next year, which will be held on an urban circuit passing through the port until 2014, is another major draw which makes Valencia's Real Juan Carlos I Marina, an exciting port of call for cruise passengers.

Between 2001 and 2006 the number of cruise calls has risen 400% and in 2007, 160 visiting ships will bring around 200,000 passengers to Valencia.





Via French Riviera ports

French Riviera Cruise Club online

The French Riviera Cruise Club is the latest MedCruise destination to form such an alliance amongst the local cruise community aimed at promoting cruise tourism in the region.

Founding members are the the Alpes-



Jean-Claude De Troch – President of the French Riviera Cruise Club

Maritimes General Council, the Riviera Côte d'Azur Regional Tourism Committee, the Nice Côte d'Azur Chamber of Commerce and Cannes,

Nice and Villefranche-sur-Mer Tourism Offices.

In July, the French Riviera Cruise Club (FRCC) launched its all-English official website to promote cruising at www.frenchrivieracruiseclub.com.

Various services are offered to passengers and the trade including a public access section providing tourist and cultural information on each town and port managed by Nice Côte d'Azur Chamber of Commerce. On display are interactive maps, an events calendar, port services, daily cruise calls and weather reports.

The site also suggests excursions in French and English for independent cruise passengers to 14 places reached from Cannes, Nice and Villefranche.

A reserved access section for tourist industry professionals offers the possibility to download a Riviera Côte



d'Azur sales manual listing cruise agents and services. Also included is the list of FRCC members. Login access to this area can be obtained by e-mailing cruiseclub@rivieraports.com.

This is not the first initiative of its kind amongst MedCruise ports and destination members. Others who have successfully launched such networks include Sete, Malta and Dubrovnik, which will also be featured in future issues of MedCruise newsletters.

Via Alicante

Thrills and spills

Alicante, is one of the most well-known towns on Spain's Costa Blanca. From here the beaches stretch for several kilometres attracting many sun and pleasure lovers. The sun in Alicante shines virtually year-round.

The port is very close to the city centre, so within a few minutes of disembarking, passengers can stroll in any of the numerous shopping centres or visit the museums. An electric streetcar runs from the harbour area to the beaches of San Juan and El Campello, along the coast, for those seeking relaxation.

Places worth visiting in the city include Santa Barbara castle, the Church of Santa Maria and the Archaeological Museum. Just outside is Alicante is Elche, often referred to as 'The City of Palms', Elche is perhaps best known for its large palm tree forest (Palmerar D'Elx), which was thought to have been started by the Phoenicians in the 6th century BC, but was mostly designed and irrigated by the Moors during the Arab occupation (8th to 13th centuries).

Terra Mitica is one of Europe's most exciting theme parks and is Benidorm's main tourist attraction. It has something for all age groups and can be reached on a full day tour from the ship.

Don't worry about going if you're not a fan of the adrenaline rush, as there are always plenty gentler options including some great water rides. To make sure that younger children never feel left out, the park has cleverly constructed 15 kiddie rides which are replicas of the scarier adult version. All in all, there is something for everyone at Terra Mitica.

Terra Mitica is split into five themed areas and every year new attractions are offered including the Warrior of the Dawn, a Greek simulation experience where you enter a digital world of adventure. For speed demons the Mitikarts race track is for you. There's a special area just for young children to have a spin. If the haunted house is more your taste then head for the Pyramid of Terror where mummies and pharaohs will attempt to scare you to death!

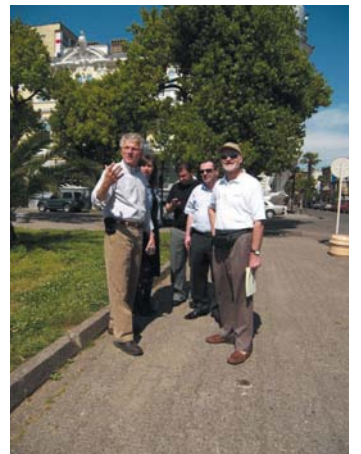




Site inspection of Batumi

Peter Cox, director of itinerary and land development for Seabourn Cruise Line, and Bruce Krumrine, vp shore operations for Princess Cruises and Cunard Line, paid a visit to Batumi in Georgia for a site inspection in May arranged by MedCruise, immediately following its General Assembly in Sochi.

Taking advantage of a late night ferry across the Black Sea to Turkey, the two cruise line reps ducked out of Sochi with Phridon Surmanidze and Konstantin Megrelishvili of Batumi Sea Port, Ltd. and headed to Batumi, where they were greeted by local officials. The inspection was reported to be a success, as Cox arranged to add Batumi to Seabourn's future Black Sea itineraries. Captured here are some photographs from their visit.



l-r Bruce Krumrine and Peter Cox sample some local Georgian wine

City built on seven hills



Roman theatre in Nora, with splendid beaches beyond, 25 km from Cagliari

city was built on seven hills, and can date its origins back to Phoenician-Punic times, and also has many Roman ruins. There are also many traces to be found of the Spanish and Pisan invasions of the island during the first centuries of the last millennium.

Cagliari is the capital of Sardinia, and the largest city on the island. This lively city has plenty to offer cruise passengers: historical sites as well as a very modern atmosphere. The

been the main entry point to the island for centuries, bringing in many peoples and cultures. The area around the port, known as Marina, is alive with restaurants, cafés and bars. Closeby is Poetto beach, one of the most beautiful beaches in Sardinia.

The island can offer opportunities for

walking, hiking, fishing and horseback riding. Beaches are plentiful for those who want to relax. For an action-packed adventure those who wish to try sailing, surfing, scuba-diving, and snorkelling, can find plenty of suitable options. Popular tours from Cagliari include the white beaches and sea park of Villasimius and the nearby Molentargius lagoon where hundreds of flamingos wade tinging the sky with a rosy hue. The lagoon, which extends over 8km, is a preferred choice for Cagliarians, and the coast beyond has a myriad of beaches.





Via Malta

Winter cruising event

Winter cruising is the focus of a new specially dedicated conference and workshop organised by Seatrade and endorsed by MedCruise and the Malta Tourism Authority, amongst others, to be held in Malta on January 17-18th, 2008.

Winter cruising is now a mainstream product. The number of ships deployed in the Mediterranean outside the traditional summer season is significant and growing, and there are many other examples around the world of deployments that break out of the familiar seasonal pattern.

Winter cruising represents a major opportunity for: cruise lines to address their seasonality challenge and boost yields; destinations and ports to extend their seasons; retail agents to sell a new and exciting alternative product and above all for consumers who want to enjoy a winter break at sea, and visit marquis attractions at a time of year when visitor numbers are smaller and temperatures are more moderate.

Malta, at the epicentre of many winter cruise itineraries, will be the location for the first Seatrade Winter Cruising Forum, bringing together a cross-section of the stake holders in this still new cruise concept to discuss how its huge potential can be realized.

The Forum will include a two-day conference and workshops, plus a full and lively social programme in the outstandingly appealing environment of one of the Mediterranean's most popular cruise destinations. More details can be found at www.seatrade-global.com

Costa Serena - built for year-round Med cruising



Via Catania

In the shadow of Etna

Lying in the shadow of Etna, Catania has been damaged by lava flows and earthquakes on several occasions throughout its history but surprisingly the city still boasts many historical remains dating back to the Roman times, including a number of amphitheatres.

A large intact one, off Via Vittorio Emanuele, was built on the site of an earlier Greek theatre and is understood to have been able to accommodate as many as 6,000 spectators. The nearby Odeum, a much smaller theatre, could hold about 1,300. An even larger one, closer to the commercial centre, was built in the 2nd Century AD and now lies below ground level and is usually closed. This vast complex probably seated about 14,000 spectators. Only a small part of is actually visible today.

Ursino Castle used to be a coastal fortress before volcanic eruptions extended the coastline. This castle was built by Richard de Lentina on the orders of Emperor Frederick II



von Hohenstaufen in the first half of the 13th Century and is now a museum open to the public.

Though extensively rebuilt on Baroque and neo-classical models, the oldest part of the cathedral (duomo) was constructed in 1092. Most of Catania's wide streets and majestic palaces were built during the 18th Century, coincidental to the Bourbon's development of Naples, and the architectural similarity between the two cities is striking.

MedCruise Members

■ Alanya	■ Naples
■ Alicante	■ Palamos
■ Almeria	■ Palermo
■ Balearic Islands	■ Pescara
■ Barcelona	■ Piraeus
■ Bari	■ Portoferraio
■ Batumi	■ Portuguese ports
■ Cagliari	■ Ravenna
■ Cartagena	■ Rijeka
■ Castellon	■ Sete
■ Catania	■ Sevastopol
■ Ceuta	■ Sibenik
■ Cyprus ports	■ Sinop
■ Dubrovnik, Korcula	■ Sochi
■ Egyptian ports	■ Split
■ French Riviera ports	■ Tarragona
■ Gibraltar	■ Toulon, St Tropez
■ Koper	■ Trieste
■ La Spezia	■ Tunis
■ Lattakia	■ Valencia
■ Livorno	■ Valletta
■ Malaga	■ Venice
■ Messina	■ Volos
■ Monaco	■ Zadar
■ Moroccan ports	

Contacts

MedCruise

José Campos
Secretary General
Portal de la Pau, 6
08039 Barcelona, Spain
Tel: +34 607 87 87 50
Fax: +34 93 306 88 17
secretariat@medcruise.com
presidency@medcruise.com



MedCruise News

Editor: Mary Bond
Editorial Assistant: Libby Isted
Production Editor: Fiona Hockey
Seatrade Communications Ltd
Tel: +44 1206 545121
Fax: +44 1206 545190
mary@seatrade-global.com

Seatrade

Published by Seatrade Communications Ltd