



MEDCRUISE

NEWS

QUARTERLY SEPTEMBER 2005

ISSUE 9

Farewell from outgoing president – Juan Madrid

New president to be decided in Cyprus



■ Juan Madrid – stepping down

It seems like yesterday when I was named President of MedCruise and now, three years later, following the rotating principle of which I have always been in favour, this brings me to my last editorial as I'm due to step down as the president in October at the next general assembly in Cyprus.

It has been a period of important challenges not only for the cruise industry but also for MedCruise. Nevertheless, looking back to the starting point in May 2002, I can say that I'm very satisfied and proud of the results.

Whilst the cruise industry has demonstrated to be a resilient business MedCruise has also overcome some difficulties.

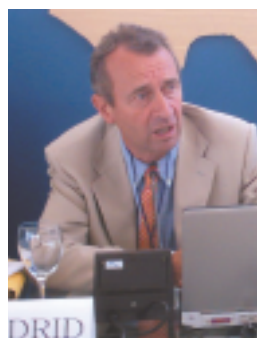
One of my main challenges was to create a more decentralized association, giving special assignments to our Directors to make the future transition easier and smooth. All members of the Board of Directors have been fully devoted to the assigned task and I want to congratulate them personally for their excellent work. I'm convinced that sharing responsibilities amongst them has definitely brought positive results.

Concerning membership, during the past three years seven ports have joined the association, two of them from Russia and Ukraine and therefore, extending our borders to the Black Sea.

Security has always been a priority for MedCruise members and nowadays more than ever. Our members have invested a huge quantity of money lately to meet the ISPS Code requirements. We are now on the way to developing a standard of security and quality in the region.

As far as promotion is concerned, the marketing literature has been proven as a useful tool for the decision makers and for the promotion of the area. Our participation in the main trade shows as well as our state-of-the-art website has also helped to make our association more widely recognised.

In light of the constant changes in ports and in the cruise business, an updating of our constitution was crucial. One year ago we approved our new by-laws widening the membership criteria to associated members (tourism boards, shipping agencies, cruise lines). As the cruise business is growing there are more entities which should be involved in the process and work together in the same direction.



■ New candidates: Albert Poggio & Laurent Monsaingeon

In this aim we are maintaining a good relationship with the main cruise associations and European institutions and we are working on common projects. Negotiations with ESPO to be the representative body of MedCruise and our sister association Cruise Europe, in front of the EU, are at the final stage.

Another initiative which I think has worked



■ MedCruise general assembly will be held October 19-21 2005 in Limassol, Cyprus, where the new presidency will be decided

for both parties is the work-shops we normally organise during our General Assemblies. MedCruise members have the opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with cruise line executives. Ports are informed about what cruise lines expect from them and the cruise line staff have the opportunity to know about new destinations or improvements in ports.

In summary, everyone in MedCruise has worked with enthusiasm during these years and I am convinced that the new President will give the association a perfect lead. Both candidates, Albert Poggio from Gibraltar and Laurent Monsaingeon from French Riviera Ports, have been actively involved in the association for many years and, though they have very different qualities, both have a high professional and human profile.

Concerning the new Board of Directors, I am very proud to see the considerable number of members, coming from different regions and cultures, who have presented their candidature. This fact shows that the association is alive and that members believe on it.

And last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support of all MedCruise Directors, members and colleagues of this industry which is so close to my heart.

Almeria-Motril

Jewel's first visit



Last year 29 calls were recorded (as of June 2004) at Almeria-Motril Port Authority with 21 of these at Almeria bringing 12,887 passengers and 8 at Motril bringing 3,997 passengers. As of June 2005 there have been 35 calls for the Port Authority, 20 at Almeria bringing 16,066 passengers and 15 at Motril bringing 6,722 passengers. This is an increase of 26% in passenger numbers.

Norwegian Cruise Lines visited Almeria Port for the first time this summer when Norwegian Jewel anchored for a few hours on August 20.

The mayor of the city and Port Authority President Jose Antonio Amate visited the captain of the ship and presented him with a plaque (pictured).

Alanya

Jetty expansion complete



The Turkish port of Alanya has recently completed a \$3.5m project to extend its jetty by 250mtr. The work was completed on August 8 and the jetty has increased from 282.5mtr to 532.5mtr with an alongside depth of 8-16mtr. This allows four cruise ships to berth at the same time and will allow Alanya port to accommodate the largest size of cruiseship.

As of August 1, 69 cruiseships and 35 fast ferries had called at Alanya this year bringing a total of 49,000 cruise passengers and 8,000 ferry passengers to the port.

The four cruiseships pictured at Alanya's new pier this summer are Dream Princess, Mirage I, The Iris and Royal Iris.

Balearic Islands

Visitor numbers up



As of August 31, the Balearic Islands have increased their number of visitors compared to the same period in 2004. Calls to Palma, the busiest of the four ports, have grown by 8% in the last year with 265 calls and 478,494 passengers in 2004 and 288 calls and 576,674 passengers this year. Mahon has recorded a rise in passengers although fewer ships have called with 54 calls and 38,136 passengers in 2004 and 48 calls and

38,751 passengers in 2005. Ibiza has had a 20% increase in ship calls with 60 calls and 52,971 visitors in 2004 and 75 calls and 73,708 passengers this year. La Savina has had a slow year with calls halving from four in 2004 to two this year.

Thomson and MSC Cruises both operated two ships all season in Palma and AIDA Cruises' AIDACara will operate the entire winter season from Palma.

Cyprus

Exceeded expectations



Cyprus ports exceeded their expectations this year for cruise passengers. The ports were hoping to receive a similar number to last year when 177 cruiseships called bringing 130,034 passengers, but so far in 2005 197 ships have called at Cyprus with over 138,000 visitors. The ports are expecting an increase of about 10% for 2006, which would mean in excess of 150,000 passengers.

The Cyprus Ports Authority is to welcome MedCruise members to the 27th general assembly of MedCruise, which will be held in Limassol from October 19-21, 2005.

When calling at Cyprus, head north from Limassol and you will find yourself in the foothills of the pine forested Troodos Mountains, with charming stone villages such as Omodos, Lania and Tochni along the way. Paphos, on the western coast, has so many historical sites that the whole town has been placed on UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List.

Gibraltar

One millionth passenger



The Gibraltar Cruise Terminal welcomed its one-millionth passenger since it opened in 1997. The lucky passenger was Mrs Sandra Young who was accompanied by her husband Stanley. Mr and Mrs Young (pictured) travelled from Newcastle, UK onboard the cruiseship Sea Princess, who made her maiden call at Gibraltar this year. On hand to welcome them were the Minister for Trade, Industry and Communications, The Hon Joe Holliday and the Master of Sea Princess. Cruise calls have increased this year at Gibraltar from 168 calls and 162,780 passengers in 2004 to 176 calls and an estimated 170,000 passengers in 2005. Due to these larger ships calling at the port, 2006 will likely have an even greater number of visitors with 188 cruise calls booked so far carrying approximately 210,000 passengers.

Lisbon

Wide range of calls

Lisbon has seen a slight decrease in the number of passengers calling this year, a situation the port hopes that will be reversed next year. 2004 registered the highest number of cruise calls to the port, with 270 ships calling bringing 241,557 passengers. 2005 is slightly down on that with 240 cruise calls and around 230,000



passengers. Lisbon has become a very popular cruise call and is called at by all the major lines. Besides the excellent natural conditions, the three passenger terminals served by more than 1,500mtr of berth quays with draughts between 8-12mtr allow the berthing of all cruise vessels in Lisbon.

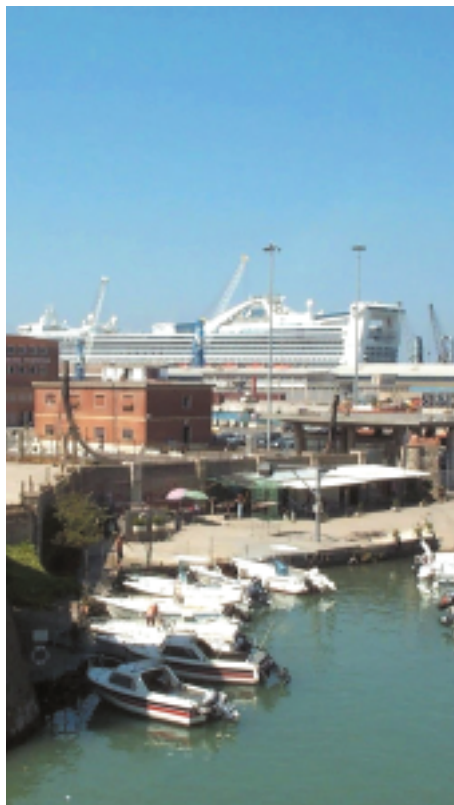
In 2004 Queen Mary 2 called at Lisbon four times, bringing more than 10,000 passengers and in 2005 P&O's new Arcadia, Saga Shipping's Saga Ruby and Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Jewel all made maiden visits.

As far as popular tours are concerned, Lisbon offers the visitor a wide range of choices as the port is situated close to the city centre including the opportunity to visit several museums, palaces, churches or some of the interesting villages located around Lisbon, namely Cascais, Sintra, Mafra, Alcobaça, Batalha or Fátima. The newest tour offered to passengers is the medieval Óbidos, a unique experience to travel back in time. Following a scenic 75-minute drive through the beautiful Portuguese countryside, visitors arrive at the medieval town of Óbidos, which although its origins are obscured by history may date back to 308 BC.

Livorno

450,000 passengers expected in 2006

Livorno has witnessed a large increase in the amount of cruise traffic it has received in the last year. In 2004 318 cruise calls with 387,379 passengers were handled and so far in 2005 there have been 389 cruise calls bringing 430,000 passengers, that is an 18% increase. Expectations for 2006 are good with an estimated 450,000 passengers entering the city.



Livorno is the third largest port on the Western coast of Italy and played a significant role under the Medici family, during the Renaissance. It has a lot for the visitor to see, particularly popular is its magnificent 16th century architecture.

A popular shore excursion is the visit to the vineyards of Sassicaia, one of the finest wines in Italy. A cabernet from the first vineyard of Sassicaia in Bolgheri and so far the only wine in Italy that has been awarded its own DOC, the 'DOC Bolgheri Sassicaia'. Its roots lie in the blending of Italian and French grapes to produce this popular wine.

Piraeus

Expecting a 30% rise in 2006



Piraeus port has experienced a 10% increase in cruise calls in the last year. For 2004 there were 195 cruiseships calling to Piraeus bringing in 45,456 passengers. For 2005 there have been 217 cruiseships with 67,277 passengers. They are expecting a 30% increase on this for 2006.

A great shore side excursion is a trip to some of the Greek Islands. There is a tour that departs Piraeus and visits three islands of the Saronic Gulf: One of those islands is Aegina, which is famous for its peanuts and the beautiful temple of Athina Afaia; Hydra, its beautiful pastel coloured houses perched up on the rocks that are popular with painters, and its long history.

Sibenik

Newest MedCruise member



Medcruises' newest member, Sibenik in Croatia, has had a 15% increase in cruise calls in 2005. Calls have risen from 43 in 2004 to 54 in 2005 bringing 4,423 passengers in 2004 and 5,100 in 2005. As of the beginning of August the port had received 25 affirmative calls for 2006 and are hopeful that it will reach 60.

Swan Hellenic's Minerva II (pictured above) made its maiden visit to Sibenik this summer.

Popular tours undertaken from the port include Krka Waterfalls, where the River Krka springs at the foot of 22mtr high Topoljski Slap Falls, which is deafening in winter and dry in summer. Another attraction nearby is the Falcon Centre where visitors can learn about the magnificent bird of prey and his master. For those more adventurous visitors there is the opportunity to partake in bungee jumping. With close proximity to town, the Sibenik Bridge is 30mtr high and has been a popular bungee jumping site since 2000.

Toulon

An exciting year ahead



2005 has been a busy year for the port of Toulon with 59 calls to date carrying an estimated 56,400 passengers. This is a significant rise from last year when 40 cruiseships called with 47,761 passengers. The majority of the cruiseships are European and nearly 85% are British. In 2005 Toulon had 13 calls from Island Escape, 18 calls from Thomson Cruises with the new Thomson Destiny making her maiden visit, three calls from Saga, with the new Saga Ruby also making her maiden visit, two calls from P&O with both Artemis and Ocean Village calling at Toulon for the first time. 2006 looks set to be an exciting year, 59 calls have been booked so far. Fred Olsen will be bringing its new ship Boudicca as well as Braemar, the new Island Star of Island Cruises is due to call, as is Marco Polo of Orient Lines.

Toulon remains a popular stop for cruise passengers as the port is situated right in the centre of the city and gives visitors access to the historical streets. Also popular tours undertaken from the port include visits to St. Tropez, Bormes les Mimosas, Aix en Provence and Cassis.

Valencia

Good forecasts continue

Valencia has had an increase of about 20% in cruiseship calls this year and forecasts 120 calls for 2005 with approximately 120,000 passengers compared to 2004 when 98 ships called with 105,000 passengers. Another 25% increase in calls for 2006 is expected.



This year has seen Spanish cruise operators Iberojet and Travelplan performing turnaround operations in Valencia, as well as several different companies performing transit calls: Aida, Costa Crociere, MSC, Seabourn, Peter Deilman, Silver Seas, Hapag Lloyd, Phoenix Reisen, Vivamare, Radisson Seven Seas, Thomson, ResidenSea and Celebrity.

One of next year's major attractions are the 2006 America's Cup regattas occurring in May and June in Valencia. The XXXII America's Cup will take place in Valencia in 2007 and some of the preliminary races will also take place in the city.

Zadar

New 'Orchestra of Nature' draws attention



Zadar's cruise port has been given a new look with the completion of the Sea Organ, the world's first pipe organ that is played by the sea. Situated about 30mtr from the new cruise port, the Sea Organ is a series of elegant stone stairs that descend into the sea. The stairs extend for about 70mtr along the coast, and under them, at the lowest sea tide level are 35 pipes, built vertically to the coast, of different lengths, diameter and tilts. On the pipes are whistles, which play 7 chords of 5 tones, and the movement of the sea pushes air through, and - depending on the size and velocity of the wave - chords are played. The stone stairs are perforated, which enables the sound to come out. The site has received great reactions from tourists and local people alike. It has become a place for relaxation, contemplation and conversation while listening to an endless concert of mystic harmonies from the 'Orchestra of Nature'. The project's architect is Nikola Basic, and a team of experts from Zagreb and the island of Murter engineered the organ itself.

This new art installation is an added attraction to the visitors of Zadar and this shows in the increase of cruise calls to the city. 60 cruiseships have called into Zadar in 2005, which is an 80% rise from 2004, and 2006 is already looking busy with the port expecting up to 90 cruise calls.

MSC Cruises

MSC Cruises and Malta

3 8,000 passengers will visit Malta this year – MSC Melody and MSC Opera are scheduled to make 29 calls at Valletta.

MSC Melody's last weekly visit of the season is on October 24. MSC Opera calls in November on 11-night cruise from Genoa before crossing the Atlantic to the Caribbean.

Next summer the line has confirmed 30 Maltese calls with three ships: MSC Opera, MSC Armonia and MSC Melody. In total the trio will bring an estimated 63,000 passengers to the island.

The synergies between MSC Cruises and Malta will be highlighted later this year during a reception onboard MSC Opera on November 18.



Costa Crociere SpA

Costa to homeport in Trieste

Costa Marina will be the first cruise ship to use Trieste as a homeport next year between June and September. The Costa ship (pictured in Lisbon) will depart from the Adriatic port every week on a seven-day itinerary.

Other MedCruise members used by Costa as home ports in Italy: Naples, Palermo, Catania, Messina, Bari, and Venice.



Royal Caribbean International

Voyager heads for Europe



Royal Caribbean International's Voyager of the Seas will be sailing out of Barcelona in 2006. The first Voyager-class ship to operate in Europe, will debut from Barcelona next summer with cruises around France, Italy and Malta, and Splendour of the Seas (moving from Barcelona) will start from Venice taking in the Greek Islands, Turkey and Dubrovnik.

For the second year running, RCI is offering a dedicated Legend of the Seas Mediterranean brochure including shorter, more varied itineraries with four-, seven-, 10-, 11- and 14-night trips ex-UK. These cruises also offer overnight stops in Barcelona and Palma and new ports of call including La Rochelle and Bilbao.

Rounding out RCI's deployment, Brilliance of the Seas will again operate 12-night cruises from Barcelona to the Western Mediterranean.

Swan Hellenic

Minerva II's speedy Med date



Discovery cruise line Swan Hellenic reports a cruise to Malta, Italy, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia as the fastest selling itinerary during the three month period after its Minerva II's 2005 brochure was launched. Also quick to go were cruises to Italy/Tunisia and an Eastern Med sailing stopping in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. The 710-lower berth chartered ship is the former R Eight.

Carnival Cruise Lines

Carnival Liberty returns



Carnival Cruise Lines' Carnival Liberty is returning to the Med next year. The ship will operate 15 'Grand Mediterranean' 12-day voyages roundtrip from Civitavecchia, with calls at MedCruise member ports of Naples, Dubrovnik, Venice (two days), Messina, Barcelona, Cannes and Livorno.

The itineraries are identical to this year's eight Mediterranean cruises, in what was the company's first-ever Med program. The 110,000gt ship was handed over by Fincantieri's Monfalcone yard this July.

Princess Cruises

Princess boosts Med capacity 25%



Princess Cruises will offer an expanded Mediterranean season in 2006, with nearly a 25% capacity increase. The line will add four Greek Isles cruises, return to Egypt, make a maiden call at Elba and extend its three-ship season from mid-April through November.

In all, the company will operate 33 Mediterranean departures of 11 itineraries. Grand Princess returns with nine cruises of 12 days, sailing between Barcelona and Venice whilst Grand and Golden Princess will offer an expanded season of 12 Greek Isles sailings, with two varied 12-day itineraries.

Golden Princess marks the company's return to Egypt with a 12-day roundtrip cruise from Civitavecchia with ports including Alexandria and Port Said. Sea Princess returns to Europe for a series of 14-day roundtrips from Southampton including Mediterranean options.

Princess' maiden call at Portoferraio, Elba comes on Grand Princess' April 15 trans-Atlantic voyage from Galveston (or Fort Lauderdale) to Civitavecchia.

easyCruise

easyCruise eyes expansion

easyCruise reports that August occupancy levels aboard easyCruiseOne on the French/Italian Riviera reached 83% compared to 74% in July, 55% in June and 59% in start-up month May. Mid-80s occupancy levels are a 'natural maximum' for the product, it adds, given the flexible booking system that allows passengers to stay as little as two nights aboard, meaning weekends get fully booked before mid-week segments.

Further encouraging result is that average passenger age is 33, some 20 years less than the published industry norm, the company adds.

Plans for further secondhand or newbuild cruiseships are under discussion but easyCruise says no decision will be made before the winter season is over. Louis Cruises will provide consultancy services to easyCruise relating to the future expansion of its activities.



Saga Cruises

Saga's spirit of adventure

Saga has launched its inaugural 2006 programme for new acquisition Spirit of Adventure (the former Berlin), offering a new kind of cruising experience exclusively for people aged 50 and over (a travelling companion may be aged 40 or over).

The maiden cruise is a 14 night east Med cruise starting in Limassol, calling in Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. The 352-passenger ship will cruise the Med, Adriatic and Black Sea throughout the summer.



Genoa

Genoa wins green award



Lading Italian classification society RINA has awarded the Port of Genoa Authority a certificate of compliance with international standard ISO 14001 for its Environmental Management System.

The commitment of the Genoa port authority to an environmentally sound management system for all port activities began over ten years ago, when the port of Genoa was one of the first ports to put in place an environmental structure. The achievement of ISO 14001 status recognises the benefits which the management system brings to both the local community and the marine environment.

La Spezia

New cruise terminal planned

Eastern Ligurian port of La Spezia is set to step into the cruise market with a renewed effort as La Spezia Cruise Facilities (LSFC) has obtained the concession to operate a cruise terminal at the port for the next five years.

So far La Spezia has had limited cruise throughput, with some 25,000 passengers in 2004 and 42,000 expected this year, but a tender to redesign the waterfront, including a new cruise terminal, is set to be launched by the port authority.

'As a cruise port, La Spezia is in an excellent position,' said LSFC chairman Giorgia Bucchioni (pictured), who is the former chairman of the port authority. 'It's only 140km away from Florence, 50km from Pisa and Lucca, 20km from the Cinque Terre area, some 70km from Portofino and 90 km from Genova.'

Ships currently calling at La Spezia berth offshore and use either the ships own tenders or a shuttle service provided by Battellieri del Golfo. LSFC is set to build a special pontoon similar to that used in Villefranche on the French Riviera.



Membership expansion

Call for Associate and Cruise Line members

In addition to port members MedCruise has two other kinds of membership: Associate members and Cruise Line members. Associate membership is open to any entity, public or private, whose activities involve tourism boards, port agents etc. The Associate member must be linked to a regular member. A Cruise Line member can be the line itself or a cruise ship tour operator. Anyone interested in becoming an Associate or Cruise Line member please e-mail Carla Salvado, Secretary General, on secretariat@medcruise.com

MedCruise Members

■ Alanya	■ Naples
■ Alicante	■ Palamos
■ Almeria	■ Palermo
■ Balearic Islands	■ Piraeus
■ Barcelona	■ Portoferraio
■ Bari	■ Portuguese ports
■ Cagliari	■ Sete
■ Cartagena	■ Sevastapol
■ Catania	■ Sibenik
■ Ceuta	■ Sochi
■ Cyprus ports	■ Split
■ Dubrovnik, Korcula	■ Tarragona
■ French Riviera ports	■ Toulon, St Tropez
■ Genoa	■ Trieste
■ Gibraltar	■ Tunis
■ Israeli ports	■ Valencia
■ La Spezia	■ Valletta
■ Livorno	■ Venice
■ Malaga	■ Volos
■ Messina	■ Zadar
■ Monaco	

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Published by Seatrade Communications Ltd