

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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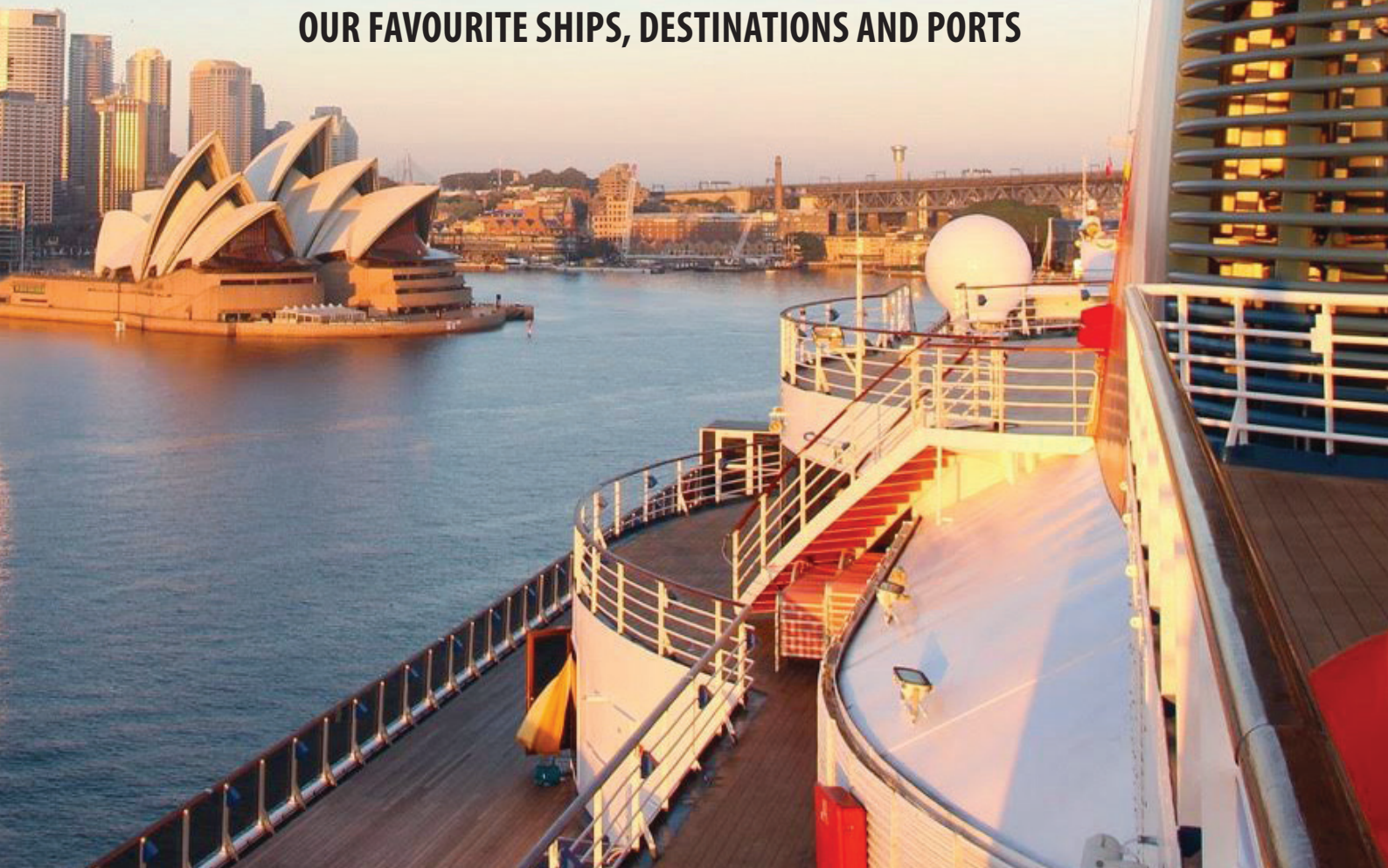
# cruise

passenger

**SPECIAL EDITION**

## *Great Aussie* **CRUISE GUIDE**

**OUR FAVOURITE SHIPS, DESTINATIONS AND PORTS**



# New-wave *luxe*



Fans of upmarket cruising will have plenty to choose from this wave season with some of the world best luxury and premium ships heading our way, reports *Bernadette Chua*.

Luxury seems to be the theme for this year's wave season. Five-star operators such as Crystal Cruises, Regent Seven Seas, Seabourn and Silversea, along with premium lines such as Celebrity Cruises, Azamara Club Cruises and Cunard are sending ships our way for another bumper wave season.

There will also be some new arrivals. *Norwegian Jewel* will be the first Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) ship to be homeported in Australia in 13 years. She will sail a range of itineraries around Australia and to New Zealand. NCL, known for the bright and colourful artwork on the bows of its ships, is also highly regarded for its excellent food and service.

The latest offering from Seabourn, *Seabourn Encore* was launched at the beginning of the year and made a whirlwind trip Down Under after her christening in Singapore. She'll be here for about six weeks this season, sailing from Asia and stopping along the way in Bali as well as the Great Barrier Reef before setting off on several sailings to New Zealand and the South Pacific. The line is also sending *Seabourn Odyssey* and *Seabourn Sojourn*.

There's more luxury headed our way with two Crystal Cruises ships— *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity*. The ultimate in five-star cruising, expect white-gloved butlers, fabulous all-balcony suites with your favourite beverage of choice, bespoke shore excursions and food from celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa.

Silversea is also returning with *Silver Whisper* and in early 2019, its newest ship *Silver Muse* will make her maiden call to Australia. Other notable mentions include Regent's *Seven Seas Navigator*.

Oceania Cruises, voted by *Cruise Passenger's* panel of judges as the Best Cruise Line for Food, will have *Regatta* in Australia on a 34-night cruise.

Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* and *Queen Elizabeth* will be visiting ports around Australia. It's just a warm up for *Queen Elizabeth* which will homeport in Melbourne in early 2019.



# The harbour where icons meet

Sailing into Sydney Harbour to the sight of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House, in addition to a striking coastline, make New South Wales one of the most popular Australian states to cruise to.

Sydney is the main cruise port for Australia. Major lines such as Royal Caribbean have homeported their largest ships here, including the technologically advanced *Ovation of the Seas*. Norwegian Cruise Line is sending *Norwegian Jewel* to homeport in Sydney at the end of the year. Carnival, P&O and Princess have several ships sailing from Sydney and luxury cruise brands such as Crystal, Seabourn and Silversea make regular calls.

Stepping off your cruise ship at the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Sydney's Circular Quay puts you in the heart of The Rocks, the city's colonial heritage area. It's famous for its weekend markets selling arts and craft items and local artisanal produce.

The quayside Museum of Contemporary Art houses works from renowned international and local artists. It is just a short walk to the Museum of Sydney, which explains the history of the city, the State Library of NSW, which has a phenomenal collection of first-edition books and exhibitions, and The Mint, the oldest public building in the Sydney CBD, which is

now a museum. From the Opera House, walk through the Royal Botanic Garden to the Art Gallery of NSW, which has a large Asian antiquity collection, fine international and Australian art, and regular special exhibitions.

For cruisers looking for fine dining experiences, nothing is more iconic than sitting down for an opulent degustation meal at Sydney's best restaurant, Quay, which is at the Overseas Passenger Terminal. You'll feast on gastronomical fare from the kitchen of Peter Gilmore while you take in the breathtaking sights of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

For a pre- or post-cruise tour, the Blue Mountains

World heritage area is a 90-minute drive from Sydney. Visit the Three Sisters rock formation at Katoomba, indulge in high tea at the newly refurbished Hydro Majestic Hotel and explore the vintage shops in Leura.

Newcastle, two hours north of Sydney, is fast becoming a cruise hub with lines such as Silversea, Celebrity, Royal Caribbean, P&O, Princess, Oceania and Norwegian visiting over the next year. The extensive Hunter Valley wine region is about a 30-minute drive away and winery tours are run from town.

In 2016, Royal Caribbean announced it would be calling at Wollongong, an hour south of Sydney. >

// WORDS BERNADETTE CHUA

*Sydney Harbour*

NEW SOUTH WALES: PORTS



The Grain Store, Newcastle

EDEN

Halfway between Sydney and Melbourne, on the beautiful Sapphire Coast, Eden is known for its humpback whales and fresh seafood. September to November is the best time to spot whales and several companies offer whale watching tours. Eden Smokehouse smokes seafood such as Atlantic salmon, mussels and ocean trout, even garlic. The Eden Killer Whale Museum has exhibitions about the shore-based whaling operations that formed the town's major industry during the 1800s and early 1900s. For spectacular hikes, Ben Boyd National Park's scenery ranges from sandy beaches with pristine waters to coastal forests. **Best for:** Older cruisers, history buffs, surfers and beach goers. **Who goes there:** HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Regent.

NEWCASTLE

Newcastle has a bustling cafe scene and some great restaurants. Take the Epicurean Food Tour, led by a Newcastle local who will show you some of their favourite places and introduce you to local restaurateurs. For something casual, Scratchleys on the Wharf serves classic seafood dishes with a waterfront view. Beer fans can sip on a brew from the FogHorn Brewhouse, which has a bar and restaurant attached. For nature enthusiasts, the Kooragang Wetlands has 15 kilometres of boardwalk. For arts and culture lovers, the Newcastle Art Gallery has 6,000 pieces from Australian artists such as Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, Margaret Olley and Brett Whiteley. Newcastle has some of the best surf beaches in Australia – Bar Beach, Cowrie Hole and Merewether Beach to name a

few. If you arrive on a weekend, there are some great markets including the Hunt and Gather Markets. At Irukandji Shark and Ray Encounters, the entire family can learn about marine life. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Oceania, Norwegian, P&O, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Silversea.

SYDNEY

The Harbour City is the perfect combination of natural good looks, glamour and indulgence. First stop is the Sydney Opera House, Joern Utzon's architectural masterpiece. It is the venue for performances of all kinds and guided tours are available. Those with a head for heights can join a guided climb of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. For something completely different, jump on a ferry to Taronga Zoo or Manly, a popular seaside suburb. Beach lovers are spoiled for choice. Apart from Bondi Beach, Australia's most photographed stretch of sand, swimmers and surfers will enjoy nearby Tamarama, Bronte and Coogee beaches.

**Best for:** Couples, young families, older cruisers, shopaholics, outdoor types, culture vultures, food lovers, surfers, ocean swimmers and history buffs. **Who goes there:** Norwegian,

Carnival, Celebrity, Oceania, Royal Caribbean, HAL, Cunard, Princess, P&O.

WOLLONGONG

The Wollongong coastline is dotted with rock pools, ocean baths, sand bars and sheltered beaches, including Austinmer, Bellambi, Wollongong and North Wollongong. If you have the time, surf schools conduct lessons. The Nan Tien Temple is a sight to behold. The Temple has adopted the Chinese palace building style, merging the traditional with the modern. The Main Shrine has five large serene Buddhas surrounded by 10,000 smaller Buddhas. Tours and vegetarian meals are available. If you want to get into the water rather than just watch it drift by, consider a shore excursion to Jamberoo water park. Rides include The Funnel Web, Surf Hill, The Rock and The Taipan. There is also mini golf and a range of rides for younger children. South of Wollongong, you can visit seaside towns such as Kiama, Gerringong and Gerroa, where you can swim, kayak, surf or fish from the beach. Inland, the charming villages of Berry and Kangaroo Valley have boutique shops, cafes and historic pubs.

**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean.



Bondi to Bronte walk

A warm welcome year round

QUEENSLAND



// WORDS: SARAH LOUGHLIN

Queensland is known for its fantastic scenery, beautiful beaches and superb weather. It is a year-round cruise destination, popular with families in the holidays and festive periods over summer, and a more mature crowd escaping the cold of the southern states in winter.

Cruise passengers can experience the underwater wonders of the Great Barrier Reef, the largest of its kind. The vibrant coral and tropical fish can be viewed by scuba diving, snorkelling or a glass-bottom boat. >

Hamilton Island

A popular port of call at the southern end of the reef, the Whitsunday Islands offer world-class snorkelling, diving, sailing, seaplane flights, white beaches and luxury resorts.

Cairns is Queensland's second busiest port and from here you can access the reef or head inland to explore the Daintree Rainforest and attractions such as the Kuranda Skyrail.

For cosmopolitan sophistication, Brisbane, has the suave South Bank lined with restaurants, cafes, galleries and theatres. The state capital also has great shopping on Queens Street, city views from the Wheel of Brisbane, a giant observation Ferris wheel, and historic architecture such as the heritage-listed buildings that make up the Treasury Hotel and Casino.

On either side of Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast offer miles of white beaches, some of the world's best surfing and whale watching.

As for history, in the Whitsundays you can see ancient cave paintings. From Gladstone, you can visit the town of Seventeen Seventy, where Captain Cook first landed in the state.



Daintree Rainforest

QUEENSLAND: PORTS

BRISBANE

The laidback city has a subtropical climate and access to stunning beaches and hinterland. The city itself has shops a plenty, riverside dining and a year-round program of events and festivals.

**Best for:** Shopaholics, foodies and Queenslanders who prefer to drive to join a cruise.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Royal Caribbean, Princess, Norwegian, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, Celebrity, Azamara, Regent, Oceania, Crystal, HAL.

CAIRNS

Despite a fairly rapid expansion, Cairns still has a village feel. Spend the day meandering along the Esplanade, get out into nature with a ride on the Kuranda Skyrail, visit the Daintree Rainforest, or take a trip out to the Great Barrier Reef. Visit the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park to find out more about the area's history.

**Best for:** Snorkellers, divers, foodies and bushwalkers.  
**Who goes there:** Princess, P&O, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, Cunard, Celebrity, North Star, Coral Expeditions, Azamara, Ponant, Silversea, Regent, Oceania, Crystal, Seabourn, HAL.

COOKTOWN

The small town is full of history and offers activities such as snorkelling, horse riding, fishing and hiking. A cruise is an ideal way to reach this secluded location and experience untouched lagoons, waterfalls and beaches. Cooktown is also home to Australia's oldest Botanic Gardens, and its rock-art tours are regarded as among the best indigenous art experiences in the country.

**Best for:** History buffs and outdoor types.

**Who goes there:** Regent, Oceania.

FRASER ISLAND

Like nothing else on earth, this huge World Heritage-listed sand island is the largest on the planet, and the only place where rainforest grows directly from the sand. Picture 260-metre high sand dunes, more than 100 fresh-water lakes and miles of perfect sandy beach. There is lots of unique wildlife on the island including wild dingos and birds.

A popular attraction is the wreck of *SS Maheno*, washed ashore in a cyclone in the 1930s.

**Best for:** Adventure seekers and nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Ponant.

HAMILTON ISLAND

One of the famous Whitsunday islands, this luxury resort offers everything from fine dining to water sports, seaplane rides and even a golf course. Want to stretch your legs? Walk to the island's highest point, Passage Peak, for panoramic views.

**Best for:** Families, couples and lovers of all things luxurious.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Azamara, Crystal, Seabourn, HAL.

MORETON ISLAND

Just off the coast of Brisbane, Moreton Island offers world-class snorkelling and diving with more than 100 wrecks to explore,

great bushwalking and a mix of land and sea-based activities for adrenaline junkies such as quad bikes, parasailing and kayaking. Wildlife is abundant here and you can feed wild dolphins from the island's resort.

**Best for:** Adventure seekers, first-time cruisers and families.

**Who goes there:** P&O.

PORT DOUGLAS

An hour north of Cairns, you have access to the same splendid assortment of natural attractions including the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest. On top of that, you can enjoy Four Mile Beach, the yacht harbour and the local food, boutiques, and art galleries. Home to several luxurious resorts, Port Douglas has been known to attract Hollywood celebrities.

**Best for:** Celeb spotters, shoppers and adventure lovers.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Princess, Celebrity, Royal Caribbean.

SUNSHINE COAST (MOOLOOLABA)

White sandy beaches, local boutiques and markets, and attractions such as Australia Zoo and UnderWater World make this a popular stop. Get into the beach vibe with lunch at the surf club, try catching a few waves or



Whitsundays

take a dip at Mooloolaba Beach. If you cruise during winter, book a whale-watching trip to see the impressive marine mammals up close as they migrate up and down the coast.

**Best for:** Beach lovers, families and couples.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Seabourn, Carnival.

THURSDAY ISLAND

Sitting in the Torres Strait, 39 kilometres off Cape York at the northern tip of Australia, this tiny island is just 3.5 square kilometres and hosts a range of wonderful cultural activities where you can learn more about the Torres Strait Island people, including the Torres Strait Historical Museum.

**Best for:** Culture enthusiasts.

**Who goes there:** Coral Expeditions, Azamara, Regent.

TOWNSVILLE

Townsville is Australia's largest tropical city and has more than 300 dry sunny days a year. With architecture dating back to the 1800s, a casino and museums, Townsville has something for everyone. Visit Magnetic Island for

WWII remnants and wild koalas, the Gold Rush town of Charters Towers, or Australia's largest national park on Hinchinbrook Island. There is also a wide range of sports and activities available including white-water rafting, horse riding, bushwalking, golf and fishing.

**Best for:** Sun seekers, history buffs and seafood lovers.

**Who goes there:** HAL, P&O, Azamara, Regent, Oceania, Seabourn.

WHITSUNDAYS (AIRLIE BEACH/ WHITEHAVEN)

Snorkelling, bush walking and breath-taking views abound among the 74 islands that make up the Whitsundays. Visit world famous spots such as Whitehaven Beach, sail on a luxury catamaran, book a romantic helicopter trip or enjoy a private picnic in a secluded bay. Look out for dolphins, rays, dugongs, turtles and an array of other marine life above and below the water.

**Best for:** Water sports enthusiasts, thrill seekers and nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** Princess, Cunard, Celebrity, Royal Caribbean, P&O, Oceania, Regent.



Rock art, Cooktown

# Cosmopolitan culture



// WORDS TERESA OOI

Victoria's main cruise terminal is Port Melbourne, but ships also call at Geelong, Phillip Island, Portland and Mornington to make the most of the state's scenery and attractions.

Melbourne, the handsome southern capital, is renowned for its laneways, gastronomic culture, eclectic fashion boutiques and its obsession with coffee. Melbourne also has some of the country's best art galleries, quirky hidden bars and great music venues. Heritage buildings sit alongside cutting-edge architecture, resulting some striking streetscapes. Collins Street is described as the Paris end of town for its branded boutiques such as Chanel, Prada and Louis Vuitton.

The modern architecture of Federation Square divides opinion – you'll either love it or hate it. The vibe, however, is infectious and the choice of restaurants extensive. Sporting events, such as the Australian Open, are shown on huge screens in the open public space. Just across the river, the National Gallery of Victoria houses an extensive international collection.

Food is an obsession among Melbournians, reflected in the broad range of restaurants.

Melbourne also offers easy access to the state's numerous other attractions. Watch the famous Penguin Parade at Phillip Island Nature Park, 90 minutes from the CBD. As well as visiting the colony of little

penguins, visitors can take a boat tour to see local seals.

Visit Morning Peninsula, an hour south of the city for a relaxing soak in natural hot springs and savour local produce at restaurants, farm gates and cellar doors.

If you have time, head west to drive along the famously scenic Great Ocean Road to see the 12 Apostles, the amazing rock stacks that rise up from the Southern Ocean on Victoria's dramatic coastline.

Wine lovers will enjoy the Yarra Valley. Stay overnight at a boutique vineyard and take an early morning balloon flight for mesmerising views of the valley. Have lunch at TarraWarra Estate winery and browse the latest exhibition at its impressive art gallery.

*The Little Mule Cafe, Melbourne*

## VICTORIA: PORTS

### GEELONG

The Waterfront esplanade has cafes and restaurants, a boardwalk, a 19th-century carousel and restored art deco style sea baths. Don't miss out on a seafood feast at a waterfront restaurant overlooking the sea. Geelong is a 30-minute drive from Torquay, the eastern end of the Great Ocean Road, and Queenscliff, where ferries depart for the short crossing to Mornington Peninsula.

**Best for:** Couples and families.

**Who goes there:** Norwegian, Regent, Seabourn, Oceania.



*Mornington Peninsula*

**Who goes there:** Hapag-Lloyd, Oceania, P&O.

### PORT MELBOURNE

Cruisers who don't want to head into the city can relax at Port Melbourne beach, play beach tennis or take a 30-minute stroll along the waterfront to Sandbridge Lookout for some spectacular bay views. Try kart racing at Auscarts Racing, a popular racing circuit or explore Port Melbourne's Bay Street, which has an abundance of cafes and boutiques. Garden City Reserve is a 10-minute walk and has shady trees, walking paths and a playground.

**Best for:** Everyone.

**Who goes there:** Princess, P&O, Norwegian, Celebrity, Regent, Crystal, Royal Caribbean, Hapag-Lloyd, Seabourn, Silversea, Cunard, Azamara, Costa, Oceania, Carnival.

### PORTLAND

Portland was Victoria's first European settlement and has an abundance of historic buildings. It is fringed by rolling hills to the north, a scenic river region and a huge expanse of beautiful beaches and coastal cliffs. Take a tour of the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape, one of the world's earliest sites of human settlement. From May to October, Southern Right Whales swim close to the harbour. Other attractions include the Portland Cable Tram, Botanic Gardens, Portland Maritime Discovery Car Museum.

**Best for:** Families.



*Geelong waterfront*

# The wild and wonderful west

// WORDS TERESA OOI

Western Australia covers the entire western third of the country and is made up mostly of the arid outback. It has an incredible diverse coastline which stretches over 12,500 kilometres. A cruise of WA will take you on a journey where you will encounter wild dolphins, whales, the whitest of beaches and one of the country's most bio-diverse landscapes.

In the west and north, there are the warm waters of the Indian Ocean with the Great Australian Bight and the Southern Ocean to the south. The state's population of almost three million is concentrated in its fertile southwest corner, home to the Margaret River wine region and the capital, Perth. In the north, the Kimberley region is home to ancient Aboriginal rock art, the Bungle Bungle sandstone domes and Broome.

WA offers extraordinary experiences from swimming with whale sharks at Ningaloo, to exploring the world's largest collection of wildflowers.



Windsurfing off Rottneest Island

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA: PORTS

### ALBANY

The city has beautiful beaches, award-winning wines and farm fresh yabbies, freshly shucked oysters and boutique goats cheese. Migrating humpback and blue whales can be spotted from shore or with whale-watching cruises.

**Best for:** Families with kids.

**Who goes there:** Princess, Silversea, Azamara, Crystal, Ponant, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL.

### BROOME

The 22-kilometre Cable Beach provides a dramatic backdrop for sunset camel rides. Broome's historic Chinatown overlooks Roebuck Bay, a jumping off point for cruises to the local pearl farms. Broome Bird Observatory is one of the world's great bird-watching destinations.

**Best for:** Fun-loving couples.

**Who goes there:** Oceania, Princess, Silversea, P&O, Noble Caledonia, True North, Coral Expeditions.

### BUSSELTON

A gateway to the Margaret River region, Busselton has a 1.8 kilometre jetty, the longest wooden structure in the Southern Hemisphere. Walk or take the train along the jetty to the Underwater Observatory, voted the best aquarium in the South Pacific by TripAdvisor. Visitors can sea kayak in Geographe Bay, explore limestone caves and visit

the Margaret River wine district to sample fine wines, craft beer and local cheese and seafood.

**Best for:** Wine lovers, couples and beach lovers.

**Who goes there:** Princess, Cunard, P&O, Crystal.

### FREMANTLE

Freo, as it's affectionately known, has a lively vibe. The "cappucino strip" is home to coffee bars, cafes, pubs and breweries. The fishing boat harbour precinct has a brewery serving fish straight from the fishing fleet. The historic Fremantle Markets have 150 stalls selling fresh produce, local eats, jewellery, souvenirs and homewares. Ferries to Rottnest Island leave from the harbour and there are beautiful beaches stretching up and down the coast. It's a 30-minute drive or train ride into the centre of Perth or you can take a ferry cruise to the city up the Swan River.

**Best for:** Families with kids.

**Who goes there:** Cunard, Silversea, Royal Caribbean, Princess, Oceania, Costa, P&O.

### ESPERANCE

Laze on squeaky white beaches and explore the untouched Bay of Isles. This is a beach and nature lover's hideaway with a landscape that fills with wildflowers in spring. Swim and snorkel from Blue Haven Beach and Twilight Cove.

**Best for:** Families.



Cable Beach, Broome



Margaret River

**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean, P&O, Oceania, Azamara, Princess, Regent, Crystal, Celebrity.

### EXMOUTH

The highlights of Exmouth are Ningaloo Reef and the whale sharks that visit from April to July. The beautiful coral reef and colourful fish can be enjoyed by snorkelling right from one of the beaches of Cape Range National Park, which runs up the west coast of North West Cape flanked by red rocky gorges and sheer cliffs. Boat trips take visitors to swim with the enormous and gentle whale sharks. Bird watchers shouldn't miss the bird hide at Mangrove Bay where a variety of birds roost and feed on small fish in the shallow waters.

**Best for:** Families and nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Silversea, Regent, Azamara, Princess, Oceania, HAL, Hapag-Lloyd.

### GERALDTON

Pristine beaches include Coronation Beach, which has become a destination for international windsurfers. Point Moore Lighthouse stands out with its red and white candy

stripes. Kalbarri National Park, two hours to the north, is home to ancient red sandstone gorges, dramatic sea cliffs and rolling sand plains. About 500 species of wildflowers bloom in the park from August to November.

**Best for:** Couples and families.

**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean, Princess, P&O, Silversea, Crystal, Ponant, Regent.

### PORT HEDLAND

Flatback turtles nest on the beaches and visitors can see the young hatching from October to March. Follow the Pilbara Wildflowers trail by road and look for Sturt's crimson-red desert pea and 65 species of wattle during the winter months. The Staircase to the Moon, best viewed from Cooke Point from March to October, is a natural phenomenon that occurs when the full moon rises over the mudflats at low tide, creating an optical illusion of a staircase reaching to the moon. Follow the path of the "warlu" or Dreamtime serpent as it makes its way through the ancient landscapes of the Pilbara and Kimberley.

**Best for:** Adventure seekers.

**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean. 🐉





Maxwell Wines, McLaren Vale

# Great southern bites

// WORDS BERNADETTE CHUA

South Australia is famous for its wine with extensive vineyards in the Barossa Valley, Coonawarra, McLaren Vale, Adelaide Hills, Clare Valley and Langhorne Creek. The Barossa is home to large and small wine labels including Penfolds and Henschke, and celebrity cook Maggie Beer has her farm shop there.

The Adelaide Hills are dotted with historic towns and are renowned for gourmet food, cool climate-wines and galleries.

The state capital, Adelaide is gateway to the outback where pre or post cruise, you can explore the stunning Flinders Ranges, Coober Pedy, Lake Eyre and Birdsville.

Ships also call at Kangaroo Island for gourmet and wildlife tours and Port Lincoln on the Eyre Peninsula for underwater adventure and fine seafood.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA: PORTS

### KANGAROO ISLAND (PENNESHAW)

Swim or walk along the beach to see seals and fairy penguins. Take a guided quad-bike tour along bushland trails and across grasslands to see kangaroos and other wildlife. Sample fresh, organic food such as local honey, freshly-caught seafood and cheese made from sheep's milk. **Best for:** Intrepid travellers. **Who goes there:** Cunard, P&O, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Hapag-Lloyd, CMV, Azamara.

### PORT ADELAIDE

Adelaide has tree-lined boulevards, elegant buildings,

manicured gardens and a pleasant Mediterranean climate. Wedged between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the St Vincent Gulf, it provides easy access to national parks, vineyards, beaches and the Adelaide Hills. Highlights include the Central Market, Adelaide Oval, Botanic Garden, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide Zoo, home to pandas Wang Wang and Fu Ni, and the National Wine Centre of Australia, housed in a striking building on the edge of the Botanic Gardens. There's a vibrant culinary scene and the city is packed with small bars and laneway restaurants.

**Best for:** Families, couples, wine lovers and outdoor types.

**Who goes there:** Cunard, P&O, Princess, Royal Caribbean, HAL, Hapag-Lloyd, Silversea.

### PORT LINCOLN

Port Lincoln is one of the best places to go Shark Cage Diving or swim with Australian sea lions. Underwater scenes for *Jaws* and *Blue Water White Death* were shot in these waters. Port Lincoln is also Australia's "seafood capital" and visitors can enjoy fresh oysters from Coffin Bay as well as local bluefin tuna. Glen Forest Animal Park has Segway rides and putt putt golf. Sample

Boston Bay wines at the vineyard overlooking the bay.

**Best for:** Adventure lovers.

**Who goes there:** P&O, HAL, Princess, Ponant, Norwegian, Regent. 🚤



Port Lincoln



# Top End adventure

// WORDS TERESA OOI

Litchfield National Park

## NORTHERN TERRITORY: PORT

### DARWIN

Enjoying a picnic dinner while watching the sunset at Mindil Beach is a special experience. Sunset markets are held every Thursday and Sunday from April



Mindil Beach

to October. Visit the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory to see some great Aboriginal artworks. To feed fish by hand, head to Aquascene where hundreds of fish come to shore at high tide. The Darwin Waterfront Precinct has restaurants, bars, a pool with a beach and a wave pool. It's connected to the heart of Darwin by a sky bridge.

**Best for:** Couples and families. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Coral Expeditions, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Princess. 🚤

Darwin enjoys all year cruising. Its proximity to Asia makes it an ideal Australian gateway for visiting international cruise lines.

This year, Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas* visited Darwin, marking a bumper start to 2017. The cruise terminal is conveniently adjacent to the CBD. Most cruise ships spend between six to 12 hours in Darwin.

Many cruise passengers head to Litchfield National Park, less than two hours' drive from Darwin. The national park has rugged sandstone escarpments, two-metre high magnetic termite mounds and the dramatic Florence Falls. Those interested in indigenous art should visit Coomalie Art Centre at Batchelor en route to Litchfield National Park.

Darwin is a lively city where summer is hot and humid and winter is warm and dry. At Parap Village Markets, the flavours of Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysian and Indonesia come to life. Visitors can shop for fresh produce and pick up some craft handiwork as souvenirs.

The NT is big. It occupies one sixth of Australia's total land mass and attractions include Kakadu, Katherine Gorge, Arnhem Land, Litchfield, Alice Springs and Uluru, offering plenty for visitors to explore.

# Treasures of the Apple Isle

// WORDS TERESA OOI

From soaring mountains, serene lakes and stunning beaches to gourmet food trails offering cheese, wine, spirits and exceptional seafood, Tasmania has myriad attractions. It's no wonder the Apple Isle has emerged as a popular cruise destination with major lines offering a range of itineraries.

The small island state has attracted big names with Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Holland America and Cunard adding a competitive edge to cruises offered by P&O, Carnival and Princess.

Most cruises to Tasmania are four to five nights and call at Hobart, Port Arthur and Burnie.

Port Arthur

## TASMANIA: PORTS

### BURNIE

Burnie, the most westerly city in Tasmania, produces the best milk for cheese making. Some of island's best brie is made here and most visitors head to The Cheese Shop for a tasting. You can also try fresh produce at the farm gate or sip whisky at the cellar door.

The Fernglade Platypus Trail is a three-kilometre walk a few minutes' drive east of Burnie and is one of the most reliable platypus viewing spots in Tasmania. Another spot for sightings is the Latrobe Landcare walk, a five-kilometre track along the banks of the Mersey River.

The clear rivers and lakes around Burnie are ideal for fly fishing and there are also private farms, which give you a few tips before you cast a line.

Visit Sheffield, dubbed Tasmania's outdoor art gallery, about an hour's drive away to see the town's murals. Burnie is the gateway to Cradle Mountain with its renowned walking tracks.

**Best for:** Nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Regent, Norwegian, Princess, Silversea, P&O.

### HOBART

The centre of Tasmania's charming capital city revolves round its harbour and the waterfront is bustling with restaurants and activity. An easy walking tour around the town can take in numerous historic buildings including St David's Cathedral, H.M. Gaol Hobart and the Georgian sandstone buildings of Salamanca Place. At Salamanca Place, there's a Saturday market, perfect for picking up a few local souvenirs.

Hobart's heritage area at Battery Point offers an insight to Hobart's maritime history. You can pop in to see various churches, museums and Arthurs Circus with its well-



Dark Mofo



Hellyers Road Distillery, Burnie

preserved Georgian cottages. Beer lovers may want to visit Cascade Brewery near the foot of Mount Wellington, a five-minute drive from Hobart city centre. Visit MONA, the Museum of Old and New Art, to see the controversial private collection.

You can also explore the historic convict village of Richmond, a 30-minute drive from Hobart.

**Best for:** All ages.

**Who goes there:** P&O, Carnival, Princess, Hapag-Lloyd, Celebrity, HAL, Royal Caribbean, Azamara, Cunard, Silversea, Norwegian Line, Ponant, Crystal, Regent, Coral Expeditions.

### PORT ARTHUR

A former convict settlement, Port Arthur Historic Site incorporates more than 30 buildings, ruins and restored period homes set in 40 hectares and offers a fascinating insight to Australia's early European history. Visitors

can visit the Isle of the Dead, an island cemetery in the harbour. It is divided into two sections, the higher northern end is the burial ground for respected military personnel while the lower end is for convicts. A ghost tour around the historic site at night is not for the faint-hearted.

Take a local wilderness cruise to see the coastline between Port Arthur and Eaglehawk Neck for spectacular rock formations, waterfalls and caves carved by thousands of years of sea erosion. Bird watchers will be rewarded by the frequent sightings of sea eagles, albatross, gannets, peregrine falcons and cormorants. The Tessellated Pavement at Eaglehawk Neck is a formation of rectangular rocks that looks like a mosaic floor.

**Best for:** History lovers.

**Who goes there:** Carnival, P&O, Princess, Azamara, HAL, Cunard, Oceania. 🐼

# Land of the long white cloud



// WORDS BRIAN JOHNSTON

Cruise the long, rugged coastlines of our island neighbour and the scenery never disappoints.

Also known by the Maori name Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud), New Zealand cruise highlights include anchoring in Akaroa's splendid bay and tendering ashore and sailing the Queen Charlotte Sound towards Picton. But all these are surpassed by Milford Sound and its fellow fiords on the South Island's east coast, some of the most dramatic landscapes you could possibly enjoy from the comfort of a cruise ship. Waterfalls, wild cliffs backed by snowy peaks and (more often than not) moody mist make for great photo opportunities.

Some 30 ships visit New Zealand each season, either as part of trans-Pacific voyages or on New Zealand cruises from Australian ports. If you don't want to brave the sometimes turbulent Tasman Sea, P&O Cruises's *Pacific Pearl* also has New Zealand-only cruises out of

Auckland. Small-ship expedition lines such as Silversea, Ponant or local company Heritage Expeditions take more adventurous cruisers off the well-sailed waters by heading to New Zealand's windswept sub-Antarctic islands such as Campbell Island and the Snares and Auckland islands.

New Zealand's port towns also offer good dollops of culture and history. You can learn about Maori traditions on shore excursions to Rotorua, or early contact with the Europeans at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds in the beautiful Bay of Islands region. Akaroa has unusual French colonial influences, Dunedin boasts a castle and whisky distillery straight out of Scotland, and Napier's 1930s architecture recalls the American jazz age. You'll also find innovative, interactive museums and attractions – and of course some of the latest in adrenaline sports.

Wellington combines old-fashioned cosiness with avant-garde flair and a terrific, contemporary dining

scene, and its Te Papa Museum is outstanding. Auckland has big-city attractions embedded in wild landscapes that create one of the world's loveliest harbours. And Christchurch, battered some years ago by a series of earthquakes, is bouncing back in interesting and innovative ways, with delightful pop-up cafes and shops, in addition to old favourites such as its beautiful gardens and the International Antarctic Centre.

The New Zealand cruise season runs from early October into late April, with December, January and February the peak months. Few ships visit at other times of year, since winters are chilly. New Zealand weather can be unpredictable even in summer and with 2,813 kilometres to navigate between its northernmost and southernmost islands, expect temperature changes. The Bay of Islands is subtropical, while destinations such as Dunedin or Stewart Island lie further south than Hobart.

Wharariki Beach, Nelson

## NEW ZEALAND: PORTS

### AKAROA

Sailing into Akaroa's sheltered bay is magnificent, providing views of deep inlets and sheep-nibbled hills. The region was settled by French explorers in 1840, which explains French street names and the patisseries that tempt with éclairs and macarons. There are 40-odd colonial-era cottages with well-kept gardens, a lighthouse, a history museum and an old French cemetery, plus craft shops and art galleries. The eccentric, mosaic-studded gardens of The Giant's House are a delight.

**Best for:** Romantics, couples and cafe lovers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent Seven Seas, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn.

Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

### BAY OF ISLANDS

Waitangi is surrounded by indented coastline, offshore islands and shimmering bays, and was the first part of New Zealand to be settled by Europeans. It combines spectacular scenery and water sports such as sailing, kayaking and dolphin spotting with Maori culture and history, including New Zealand's first capital Russell and the Treaty of Waitangi museum.

**Best for:** Nature and ocean lovers, history buffs.

**Who goes there:** Carnival, Celebrity, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

### CHRISTCHURCH (LYTTELTON)

Christchurch is an innovative and forward-looking city striving to overcome its 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. View some of the earthquake-affected zones and learn how the city centre is being restored, but don't imagine Christchurch has nothing else to offer. It remains lovely along the Avon River and in its botanic gardens, has a fascinating International Antarctic Centre, and is alive with small shops and eateries.

**Best for:** Shoppers, food lovers and couples.

**Who goes there:** Hapag-Lloyd, Noble Caledonia, Ponant.

### DUNEDIN

New Zealand's fourth-largest city has great restaurants and shopping and a fascinating Scottish heritage – it even boasts a whisky distillery and kilt maker. Victorian-era architecture ranges from a landmark railway >

### AUCKLAND

With a magnificent harbour setting and landscape of ancient volcanoes, few major cities offer such wild beauty when arriving by ship. A visitor highlight is the ferry ride to the seaside suburb of Devonport, or a harbour walk along scenic Tamaki Drive to Saint Heliers, with splendid island views. The city also has great museums, shopping and dining. As evening falls, Ponsonby Road or the redeveloped waterfront at Viaduct Basin are favourite choices for a drink or casual meal. The Viaduct Basin is a short walk from the Queens Wharf cruise terminal.

**Best for:** Families, walkers, culture fans – and everyone else.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Costa, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent,

## NEW ZEALAND: PORTS



Cathlins, Otago

station to fancy Olveston House and imposing Larnach Castle. The city also has two excellent contemporary attractions: see how chocolate or ale is made at Cadbury World or Speight's Brewery Heritage Centre. Otago Peninsula, often visited on shore excursions, has albatross colonies.

**Best for:** Architecture enthusiasts, history lovers, shoppers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, Heritage Expeditions, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn.

## NAPIER

Napier is especially noted for its magnificent 1930s art deco architecture. The town is centred on fertile farmland, orchards and river valleys and sits in the middle of the Hawke's Bay wine region. Nearby Cape Kidnappers is renowned both for golf and gannet colonies.

**Best for:** Golfers and history buffs.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal,

Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Silversea.

## NELSON

Nelson is a delightful arts-and-crafts town full of galleries, glass-blowers and fashion designers. The surrounding region is noted for sunny weather, rolling vineyards, beer production and mountain scenery. Several national parks such as Abel Tasman lure adventurous visitors for hiking, kayaking and caving. Kahurangi National Park features prominently as a backdrop in *The Lord of the Rings* movies.

**Best for:** Shoppers, nature enthusiasts and hikers.

**Who goes there:** Crystal, Hapag-Lloyd, Noble Caledonia, Oceania, Royal Caribbean, Silversea.

## PICTON

Scenic sailing in and out of Picton at the head of the island-studded Queen Charlotte Sound has passengers glued to the decks. The town has an interesting little maritime museum and plenty of craft shops. Shore excursions head

inland to the wineries of the Marlborough region and the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre.

**Best for:** Scenery and wildlife lovers, wine enthusiasts and walkers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

## TAURANGA

Ships dock at Mount Maunganui, a popular beach holiday village. Beaches, headland walks, saltwater pools and village-style shopping are a stroll away. It's also the jumping-off point for Rotorua's geysers, mud pools, hot springs and Maori cultural attractions.

**Best for:** Anyone who likes scenery, walking and beaches.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, Heritage Expeditions, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent Seven Seas, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

## WELLINGTON

Though a modest capital, Wellington has plenty of energy and a surprisingly avant-garde attitude. Take the famous red cable car from downtown to

admire views, then walk down through the Botanic Gardens. The city's highlight is the superlative Te Papa Museum, with interactive, high-tech exhibits tracing New Zealand geology, history and wildlife. Surrounding excursions take you to wineries and *The Lord of the Rings* movie locations.

**Best for:** Food and coffee lovers, museum goers, shoppers, families.

**Who goes there:** Azamara Club, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, Noble Caledonia, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

## STEWART ISLAND

Stewart Island lies off the south coast of South Island and features wild beaches, rainforest and windswept hills. It has few facilities and passengers must tender from ships. Hiking, fishing, kayaking and exploring Rakiura National Park and its unusual flora and wildlife (including abundant kiwis) are the reasons to visit.

**Best for:** Nature and wildlife lovers.

**Who goes there:** Crystal, Hapag-Lloyd, Heritage Expeditions, Noble Caledonia, P&O, Seabourn, Silversea. 🚢



Lake Pukaki, Canterbury



Paradise  
close to home

// WORDS TERESA OOI

It's considered Australia's backyard, so it's no surprise the South Pacific is the most popular destination for our cruisers. What's not to love about island nations such as Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa and Vanuatu – with swaying palms, pristine beaches, clear blue waters and warm, friendly people.

Almost 400,000 cruise ship passengers went to the South Pacific in 2015, and in the past five years, the popularity of the region has grown by a phenomenal 66 per cent.

Fiji is the most popular, attracting a total 630,000 holidaymakers a year – the same as the rest of the South Pacific combined. Many put that down to the Fijian's beaming smiles and cries of "Bula!"

Vanuatu is famous for its volcanoes, diving hot spots and jungle treks to the massive Millenium Cave filled with waterfalls and bats.

New Caledonia is the third largest island in the South Pacific, and is home to some of the best coral reefs. The French-speaking island has a mix of Melanesian and French cultures.

The Pacific islands are a playground paradise where most Australians cut their cruise teeth (if such a thing is possible). >

SOUTH PACIFIC: PORTS



Noumea, New Caledonia

**NADI (PORT DENARAU & LAUTOKA), FIJI**

Relax in a thermal mud pool in Sabeto Valley and visit the nearby Garden of the Sleeping Giant to see native Fijian plants and an impressive collection of orchids. The garden also has a jungle walk and Koroyanitu National Heritage Park has walking trails through forests and grasslands as well as traditional villages.

**Best for:** All ages.  
**Who goes there:** Princess, P&O, Carnival, Captain Cook Cruises Fiji, Nobel Caledonia, Hapag-Lloyd, Oceania, Royal Caribbean, Crystal, Regent Seven Seas, HAL, Seabourn.

**SUVA, FIJI**

Suva is the busiest and largest city in Fiji. The Fiji Museum has a fascinating collection dating back 3,500 years. The Colo-I-Suva Forest has hiking trails, swimming beaches and bird-watching spots. For handicrafts, woodcarving and woven items, visit the Government Handicraft Centre or the Bavari Handicraft market where you can watch local artists making unique souvenirs. The beautiful Coral Coast stretches from Suva to Sigatoka, dotted with resorts, villages and beaches.

**Best for:** Families.  
**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean, Oceania, P&O, Princess,

Carnival, HAL, Norwegian, Seabourn, Regent, Crystal, Costa, Celebrity.

**NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA**

Adventure seekers enjoy the Mont Koghi Nature trek, starting with a four-wheel drive ride followed by a walk in the rainforest. Take a Segway ride around Parc Zoologique et Forestier to see the cagou, a flightless bird which is the symbol of New Caledonia. Amedee Island Marine Reserve is a tiny coral atoll 18 kilometres south of Noumea where you can snorkel or see coral reefs and sea turtles from a glass-bottom boat. The Tchou Tchou train traverses

the city to Notre Dame de Pacific lookout, stopping at a couple of swimming hideaways including Lemon Bay beach.

**Best for:** Families.  
**Who goes there:** P&O, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, HAL, Princess, Celebrity, Oceania, Norwegian, Costa, Ponant.

**ISLE OF PINES, NEW CALEDONIA**

Take a boat ride to Turtle Bay to see loggerhead and green turtles, swim in the clear waters or simply relax by the beach. The beautiful Cave of Queen Hortense is surrounded by rainforest and is one of the largest limestone caves on

SOUTH PACIFIC: PORTS



the island. Shop for souvenirs including sandalwood products at market stalls along Kuto Bay. The white-sand beach of neighbouring Kanumera Bay is lapped by calm turquoise water and fringed by coral reef where snorkellers can view colourful fish.

**Best for:** Couples and families.  
**Who goes there:** P&O, Carnival, HAL, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Oceania, Princess, Norwegian, Seabourn.

**PORT VILA, VANUATU**

Port Vila's bustling downtown market is a vibrant spot where local women in brightly coloured dresses shop for fresh produce including king-sized bananas, papayas and mud-crabs. Handicraft stalls sell scarves, t-shirts and colourful sarongs. At Mele Cascades water crashes down into small pools, some deep enough to swim in. For traditional culture, visit the Ekasup Village to watch demonstrations on the old ways of cooking, singing and hunting. The villagers dress in traditional garments made of palm leaves and grass skirts.

**Best for:** Families.  
**Who goes there:** HAL, Royal

Caribbean, Crystal, P&O, Oceania, Princess, Carnival, Norwegian.

**MYSTERY ISLAND, VANUATU**

This little gem at the southern tip of the Vanuatu archipelago can only be reached by ship. Surrounded by clear blue waters and sheltered by coral reefs, it is the perfect snorkelling and swimming hideaway. Ride a paddleboard and explore the surrounding bays. Enjoy a relaxing, traditional Vanuatu massage under a palm tree or in a thatched hut. Get your hair braided at a beachside village market which also sells trinkets and souvenirs. It only takes about 40 minutes to walk around the island.

**Best for:** Families with kids.  
**Who goes there:** Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Princess, Celebrity, P&O, Seabourn, Crystal.

**ALOTAU, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

Milne Bay is a lovely spot for snorkelling in clear water with myriad fish and other sea life. It was also the site of fierce fighting during WWII and tours take in places of interest including Wahuhuba Bay where the Japanese first landed. Alotau town

has a small market.

**Best for:** History buffs.  
**Who goes there:** Crystal, P&O, Cunard, Oceania, Princess, Regent.

**SOLOMON ISLANDS (GIZO & GUADALCANAL)**

Visitors can explore bustling waterfront markets, WWII historical sites and museums, or head inland for lush jungle, crashing waterfalls and ancient volcanoes. The capital, Honiara, is on the island of Guadalcanal and visitors receive a traditional welcome ceremony at Kakabona Cultural village. Gizo, the second largest town, is the hub of the Western Province. Gizo has excellent diving with clear water and brilliant coral. World War II sites can be visited by hiking or diving wrecks.

**Best for:** Divers and history buffs.  
**Who goes there:** P&O, Princess, Crystal.

**TONGA (NUKUALOFA & VAVA'U)**

Captain Cook was given such a warm welcome when he landed in Tonga in 1773 that he named it the Friendly Isles. Not much has changed since for the population of just over 100,000. Polynesia's sole surviving monarchy is a

laid-back paradise of 170 islands scattered over 70,000 square kilometres of ocean just west of the international date line. Tonga is famous for whales and from July to October you're almost guaranteed to see humpbacks.

**Best for:** Beach lovers and whale spotters.  
**Who goes there:** Princess, Oceania, HAL, Cunard, Costa, P&O, Royal Caribbean, Crystal, Oceania, Celebrity.

**APIA, SAMOA**

The capital of Samoa (formerly Western Samoa), Apia is a modern, bustling waterfront hub with a number of colonial buildings, including Villa Vailima, the former home of author Robert Louis Stevenson, which is now a museum on the outskirts of town. Make sure you explore further afield as the islands are dotted with pristine beaches, waterfalls, swimming holes, lush jungles and tiny villages. O le Pupu-Pue National Park, the country's first national park, is just 20 kilometres south of Apia.

**Best for:** Nature lovers.  
**Who goes there:** Cunard, Oceania, P&O, Princess, HAL, Norwegian, Regent, Celebrity.



Fiji

# Exotic ports within easy reach

// WORDS SALLY HAMMOND

Asian culture has long fascinated Australians. With the growth of a strong cruise industry based in Singapore, a relatively short hop away, it is even more accessible and great value.

The latest Cruise Lines International Association figures tell the story. Australians taking Asian cruises grew by more than 70 per cent in 2015, eclipsing old favourites Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and Alaska and almost equalling New Zealand.

Some of our favourite cruise lines – Princess, Royal Caribbean and Celebrity, have stationed ships in Singapore, and the city-state has two cruise terminals and a fly-cruise experience.

APT, Travelmarvel, Evergreen and Avalon have put luxury ships on rivers such as the Mekong and Irrawaddy.

Flights have become cheap and plentiful, with full-service carriers vying with the likes of Jetstar and Scoot with jaw-dropping bargains.



Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

## ASIAN: PORTS

### BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, BRUNEI

Get a sense of the wealth of this sovereign state at the Royal Regalia Museum where the Sultan of Brunei's massive coronation chariot is displayed along with lavish gifts from overseas official visitors. Nearby is the Jame'Asr Hassanil Bolkhiah Mosque, the largest in Brunei, with a three-tonne Swarovski crystal chandelier. **Best for:** Families and bling lovers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, Oceania, Regent, Silversea, Windstar.

### SIHANOUKVILLE, CAMBODIA

This country is regrouping as fast as it can after decades of terrible conflicts. There's a good central market with unusual fruit and masses of seafood. The beaches are the best parts of Snooky (as the town is known) and seafood is cooked to order over charcoal. **Best for:** Beach lovers. **Who goes there:** Crystal, HAL, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Seabourn.

### HONG KONG, CHINA

Visit Kowloon, the island CBD, and the beach villages Aberdeen and Stanley (with its vibrant sprawling market) on the other side. There are great street markets and fashion shopping. Victoria Peak and the Star Ferry from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island are a must. **Best for:** Everyone. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Costa, Crystal, Cunard, Dream, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, Princess, Ponant, P&O, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

### SHANGHAI, CHINA

Pudong's space-age buildings are best seen from The Bund river esplanade. The 16th-century Old

Town is delightful with temples, tea-houses and great dim sums. **Best for:** Everyone. **Who goes there:** Costa, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

### BEIJING (TIANJIN), CHINA

Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and the 15th-century Temple of Heaven are high on everyone's list. Hit the markets for clothing, silks, luggage and handbags. With an extra day, visit the Great Wall. **Best for:** Everyone. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Crystal, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

### BALI (BENOA), INDONESIA

Denpasar and its "Gold street" and bustling four-storey market is worth seeing, as are the surf beaches, bars, cafes and restaurants at Kuta, or the high-end resorts of Nusa Dua. **Best for:** Surfers and shoppers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, HAL, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

### JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Spend time in Old Batavia with its tranquil square surrounded by original 18th-century buildings from the time of the Dutch East India Company. Jakarta's spicy food is available at stalls in the square. Shopping is good at large modern shopping centres. **Best for:** History and food lovers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Costa, Hapag-Lloyd, HAL, P&O, Regent, Silversea, Windstar.

### NAGASAKI, JAPAN

The Peace Park is a gentle entry to the WWII bombing of the city. The Atomic Bomb Hypocenter is graphic with ruins and memorials.

**Best for:** History buffs. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, Oceania, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Windstar.

### KYOTO (OSAKA), JAPAN

Visit some of Kyoto's two thousand shrines and temples and the geisha district (Gion) to learn the importance of this traditional life. **Best for:** Photographers. **Who goes there:** Crystal, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Princess, Silversea, Windstar.

### TOKYO (YOKOHAMA), JAPAN

The Imperial City sprawls over an immense area so only plan to see a section of it. Ginza is great for luxury shopping, nightlife, cafes and restaurants. Tsukiji Fish Market is the world's largest. The Skytree Tower offers extensive views. Yokohama, with waterside parks and a silk museum, is 40 minutes by train from central Tokyo. **Best for:** Everyone. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Crystal, Norwegian, Princess, Silversea, Windstar.

### PENANG, MALAYSIA

Wander the UNESCO World Heritage-listed area of George Town, Penang's capital, with its old shop-houses. Chinese temples, mosques, churches and Hindu temples are often close together. **Best for:** Food lovers and families. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, Dream, Norwegian, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn.

### KUALA LUMPUR (KELANG), MALAYSIA

Port Kelang is about an hour from the sleek and modern Malaysian capital, KL. There are good views from the observation deck on the 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers >

ASIAN: PORTS



Singapore

but the best city views are from Menara KL Tower on Bukit Nanas. **Best for:** Families and food lovers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Dream, Norwegian, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

**YANGON, MYANMAR**

Myanmar's largest city was isolated for five decades. Downtown's historic streets showcase British colonial architecture. For affordable shopping, head to the Strand or Pansodan Street, and vibrant open-air markets. The golden stupa Shwedagon Paya is the oldest pagoda in the world. **Best for:** Photographers. **Who goes there:** APT, Azamara, Crystal, Hapag-Lloyd, Oceania, Ponant, Regent, Seabourn, Silversea.

**MANILA, PHILIPPINES**

The Philippines' modern capital has good hotels, casinos and shopping malls. Its colonial Spanish history is preserved at Intramuros, the 16th-century walled city, once a fortress. **Best for:** History lovers. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Crystal, HAL, Oceania, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

**SINGAPORE**

There's something for everyone in this absolutely modern city. The unique three-towered Marina Bay Sands has a huge upmarket shopping mall. Don't miss the temperature-controlled conservatories, Gardens by the Bay, and the 16-storey Supertrees. Singaporean food is famous. **Best for:** Families and food lovers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Costa, Cunard, Dream, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

**SEOUL (INCHEON), SOUTH KOREA**

A delightful city with welcoming locals, temples, tea houses and ancient city gates. Visit memorials of the Korean War and the huge Namdaemun market. **Best for:** Couples. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

**TAIPEI (KEELUNG), TAIWAN**

Must-sees in the busy modern Taipei are the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Martyr's Shrine and the National Palace Museum with priceless artefacts from China. **Best for:** All ages. **Who goes there:** Cunard, HAL, Oceania, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Windstar.

**BANGKOK, THAILAND**

Don't miss the sumptuous Grand Palace and the Temple of Dawn. Chatuchak Weekend Market has more than 15,000 stalls and there are numerous shopping centres. **Best for:** Foodies and shoppers

**Who goes there:** Avalon,

Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Silversea, Windstar.

**HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM**

HCMC is a huge city with chaotic traffic, so be satisfied to only see a little in a day. Take a cooking class, be fitted for a silk dress and haggle at the massive city market. Visit the history-making Reunification Palace with its basement war rooms and the sobering War Remnants Museum. **Best for:** Families and shoppers. **Who goes there:** APT, Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Oceania, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.

**HALONG BAY, VIETNAM**

There are tours of Halong Bay visiting caves and grottos on the islands, including the Hospital Cave, a secret bomb-proof clinic used during the American/Vietnam War. Hanoi is about three hours by road. An elegant city where yellow houses echo French colonial times, there are pagodas, temples and museums – and Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum with his body on display. **Best for:** Photographers. **Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Dream, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Seabourn, Silversea, Windstar.



Busan City, South Korea



Europe's cruise magnet

// WORDS SALLY HAMMOND

It's Australia's number one long-haul cruise destination, encompassing 21 countries and two continents. At least 16 major lines station their best ships in the Mediterranean between April and October, the region's big cruise months.

The allure of the Med relies on its stunning destinations, fascinating history, amazing food and wine and unique mix of cultures. So many wonderful places are accessible from the water that this has become the perfect playground for cruise. Ships tend to travel between ports overnight, so each day is a new destination.

In a region so chock full of great locations, one night in port may not seem enough. Many use a cruise as a "degustation" from which they can choose places they will return to another time, to stay and enjoy more fully.

The region is divided into the Western Med (Spain, Portugal, France and Italy) and the Eastern Med, which includes Greece, Croatia's Dalmatian Coast, Turkey and Israel. With such an astonishing spread of cultural icons – we're talking Rome, Florence, Jerusalem, the Acropolis, and heart-stoppingly beautiful locations (the Greek islands, Corfu, Sardinia), the Med is a cruise magnet. >

Venice, Italy

MEDITERRANEAN: PORTS



Dubrovnik

**DUBROVNIK, CROATIA**

Walk the walled medieval town which is crammed with culture and history. Laze on Adriatic beaches, or enjoy museums and the vibrant cafe scene. With enough time, take a boat to an outlying island.

**Best for:** Lovers of art, architecture, history and sun.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Oceania, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**Note:** Some lines use Calvi, Portovecchio, Propriano or Bonifacio. Split and Zadar are also important ports of call.

**AJACCIO, CORSICA, FRANCE**

Napoleon's birthplace is French with an Italian slant. Enjoy great bread, patisseries and food, a relaxed Italian ambience, architecture and the many sandy beaches. Visit the main market for gourmet goodies.

**Best for:** Foodies and history fans.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**MARSEILLE, FRANCE**

The old port has glam super-yachts, a shore-front market, restaurants (try the bouillabaisse!) and cafes capturing the essence of Provence.

**Best for:** Couples, shoppers and food lovers.

**Who goes there:** Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**ATHENS, GREECE**

History is everywhere and just recalling the age of the Parthenon and Acropolis, Delphi (a day trip) and other ancient sites makes your head swim. Despite the Greek economy, the city's facelift has added a new buzz.

**Best for:** History lovers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seaborn, Silversea, Viking.

**MYKONOS, GREECE**

Celeb spotting, glitzy venues, boutiques, art galleries, museums, Little Venice with medieval houses once maybe used by pirates, golden beaches, nightlife, wining and dining.

**Best for:** Those who like a party!

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O Cruises, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**SANTORINI, GREECE**

The beauty, the colours, the non-stop sunny days, views from the caldera cliffs, the volcano itself, shopping, the ruins of Akrotiri, or simply sitting still soaking it all in – preferably with some fine seafood and a glass of local wine.

**Best for:** Everyone.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**CAGLIARI, SARDINIA, ITALY**

The terrain is rugged and wild inland, with wild ponies, sheep and flamingos. The coast can be achingly chic, with resorts, super-yachts, boutiques and designer bikinis. Alghero's old walled town is worth a visit.

**Best for:** Luxury-lovers.

**Who goes there:** Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Silversea, Viking.

**ROME (CIVITAVECCHIA), ITALY**

Rome's treasures include the Colosseum, Vatican City, St Peter's Basilica, the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Trastavere, the Spanish Steps and Via del Corso with its spectacular shopping (think, shoes and handbags, ladies!) and the whole spectacle that is Rome. Don't miss great gelati, cafes and restaurants.

**Best for:** All ages.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea.

**FLORENCE (LIVORNO), ITALY**

Florence is crammed with 15th-century history, galleries, palaces, museums and churches. Visit one or two in-depth such as the Uffizi Gallery and El Duomo) then wander across the River Arno's Ponte Vecchio with its jumble of art and goods for sale. Livorno is an hour from Florence.

**Best for:** History and art lovers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**NAPLES, ITALY**

The Greeks, Romans, Normans, Germans, French all had a hand in this rough and tumble city. Pompeii, Herculaneum, Capri and the Amalfi Coast are all nearby. Try pizza where it originated.

**Best for:** Couples, history lovers and pizza fans!

**Who goes there:** Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, Ponant, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

MEDITERRANEAN: PORTS



Monaco

**VENICE, ITALY**

Getting "lost" in the maze of lanes and bridges over hundreds of waterways. St Mark's Basilico and its grand piazza, the Grand Canal, the arched Rialto Bridge are mesmerising and a romantic gondola ride is a must.

**Best for:** Lovers old and young.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Ponant, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**MONTE CARLO, MONACO**

This tiny principality is packed with glitz and glamour, from the Grand Casino to the super-yachts of the Cote d'Azur waterfront.

Visit the palace with its priceless artwork and artefacts, and the Monaco Cathedral. Have a flutter in the casino if you fit the dress-code (seriously!).

**Best for:** Luxury lovers and celebrity spotters.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**GIBRALTAR**

The huge rock at the entrance to the Mediterranean is now a British Crown Colony. In the past thousand years it has been occupied by nine nations. Head for the top of the Rock by cable car, meet the resident Barbary apes and take in the matchless view of Europe and Africa.

**Best for:** All ages.

**Who goes there:** Celebrity, HAL, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Silversea.

**BARCELONA, SPAIN**

Barcelona's neighbourhoods range from hip to historic –

Gothic, contemporary and plain tourist driven. Las Ramblas from the Port Terminal leads to the old centre and huge central plaza, Gaudi's Basilica is unmissable, as are his many other buildings. See Barcelonetta, an artsy former fishing village.

**Best for:** Photographers, foodies and architecture buffs.

**Who goes there:** Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.

**MALAGA, SPAIN**

The sweeping bay, 16 beaches, winding lanes in the old town and plenty of places to relax with coffee or good local wine and some tapas. Granada is about two hours away, with fine old museums, palaces and the star in its crown, the Alhambra, a 14th-century palace-fortress.

**Best for:** Families and couples.

**Who goes there:** Celebrity, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, Oceania, P&O, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Silversea, Viking.



Ponant's Le Lyrial, Santorini



# Cruise into culture and history



For years, Europe has been Australia's leading long-haul destination. More than 100,000 of us cruised here on ocean liners in 2015. Northern Europe alone saw a 22.3 per cent increase with 29,960 extra Aussie cruisers.

The region includes one of the world's most remote itineraries – the Northern Lights and the Norwegian fiords. Here you will be in awe of the ice-capped mountain ridges and jagged architecture of its peaks. There are more than 1,000 fiords in Norway with seals and porpoises swimming in the blue inlets. You have a

small opportunity to catch the Northern Lights in summer. The further north you go, the more nights of midnight sun you will get.

Other popular ocean cruise destinations include Russia, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, and most of the major lines offer fabulous itineraries, be it on megaliner or a smaller luxury ship.

Of course, Europe is also a popular river cruise destination especially on the Danube, Seine, Rhine, Loire, Rhone and Duoro (see page 74 for more).

// WORDS TERESA OOI

River Danube, Budapest

## NORTHERN EUROPE: PORTS

### SOUTHAMPTON, UK

With some of England's best-preserved medieval town walls, Southampton Old Town has more than 90 listed buildings, with medieval wine vaults and churches, and fine Georgian houses and hotels.

**Best for:** History fans.

**Who goes there:** Celebrity, Cunard, MSC, Oceania, P&O, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, Carnival.

### CHERBOURG, FRANCE

An important naval base during the Napoleonic wars, the city has several museums dedicated to its residents, including the Muséum Emmanuel-Liais, a museum of natural history, archaeology and ethnography. Foodies can't go past the fresh seafood – look for lemon sole, scallops and mussels.

**Best for:** Maritime history fans.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Costa, Crystal, Cunard, HAL, MSC, Norwegian, P&O, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Viking.

### ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

From the ornate Hermitage Museum, the tsars' former Winter Palace with a vast art collection, to the Soviet-era austerity of the Russian Museum, St Petersburg is packed with history.

**Best for:** Couples.

**Who goes there:** Viking, MSC, HAL, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Silversea, Costa.

### HAMBURG, GERMANY

This seaport on the River Elbe is the second largest city in Germany and has a rich history, stretching back to medieval times. Modern Hamburg is a cultural hub with more than 40 theatres, 100 music venues and 60 museums. For modern-art lovers, visit the Kunsthalle Hamburg or the Museum for Art and Industry.

**Best for:** Culture lovers.

**Who goes there:** Azamara, Costa, Crystal, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, MSC Cruises, Norwegian, Silversea.

### KIEL, GERMANY

Attractions include the oldest building in the city, St Nicholas Church, and the Holstenstraße, one of Germany's longest shopping streets. There are also lakes, parks and two botanical gardens. The Kiel Regatta, held in June and is the largest sailing event in the world.

**Best for:** Families and sea lovers.

**Who goes there:** Costa, Cunard, Hapag-Lloyd, MSC.

### COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Stroll past Denmark's Tivoli Gardens and along the cobbled and bike-filled streets where the locals are considered to be the happiest in the world. See The Little Mermaid sculpture at Langelinje Pier and visit the Church of Our Savior and Rosenburg Castle. Stroget in the heart of the city is one of Europe's longest pedestrian streets.

**Best for:** Curious travellers.

**Who goes there:** Norwegian, Royal Caribbean, MSC, Seabourn, HAL, Princess, Oceania, Silversea.

### STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

The capital of Sweden is known for 70s pop stars so don't miss the ABBA museum. The capital is made up of 14 islands connected by 50 bridges. Jump on a hop-on, hop-off boat for a tour of the canals. Go to the Archipelago for spectacular views of the islands and take a stroll in the old town of Gamla Stan, a bustling area dating back to the 13th century that's now packed with restaurants.

**Best for:** All ages.

**Best for:** Royal Caribbean, Costa, Celebrity, Norwegian, Princess, MSC Cruises, P&O, Viking, Seabourn, Silversea, HAL, Regent, Cunard.

## CANADA &amp; ALASKA: PORTS

# North for adventure

// WORDS RODERICK EIME

Sailing the Inside Passage is top of the list for most Aussies heading to Canada and Alaska. Bordered by stunning mountain ranges with dense forest to the shoreline, the 1,500-kilometre sheltered waterway has been used since early times by mariners trying to avoid the rough seas of the Pacific Northwest.

During the northern summer, traffic through the passage gets pretty hectic with numerous cruise ships sailing the tranquil waters. The big ships stop occasionally at ports such as Ketchikan.

For a more intimate exploration, Lindblad, UnCruise and Alaskan Dream Cruises are an attractive option. Excursions by Zodiac allow a dozen passengers and a guide to spot wildlife, birds, plants and geographic features at leisure. Expedition vessels typically carry fewer than 50 passengers into some of the most secluded nooks along the passage where you can get close to calving glaciers, escorted by pods of whales and seals.

A far less forgiving stretch of water, the Northwest Passage is opening up to cruise ships due to the recent lack of ice. Last year, the luxurious *Crystal Serenity* made the epic voyage from Anchorage, Alaska all the way to New York across the top of Canada in 32 days. Both Ponant and Hapag-Lloyd have done this previously and One Ocean Expeditions regularly runs explorations of the Canadian Arctic, but *Serenity* is the largest passenger vessel to make the transit.

Canada's eastern provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick are still largely unexplored by Aussie cruisers, so if you are looking for new seas to sail, there are fertile waters around the historic and stately capitals of Montreal and Quebec City via the St Lawrence Seaway. Lines such as HAL and Seabourn will take you right into the heart of Montreal and continue around to Boston via Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.



Glacier Bay, Alaska

## ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

The largest city in Alaska has cool pubs (check out 49th State Brewing), restaurants, shopping haunts as well as cultural and historic museums including the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

**Best for:** Museum fans.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Princess, Crystal.

## JUNEAU, ALASKA

A former gold-rush town, Alaska's capital can only be reached by air or sea. Activities include whale watching and zip-lining, the Alaskan Brewing Co and glorious walking trails. Take the Glacier Shuttle to Mendenhall Glacier.

**Best for:** Nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Norwegian, Princess, Oceania, Regent, Celebrity, Royal Caribbean, Lindblad Expeditions.

## KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

With a genuine frontier town feel, Ketchikan is a popular port. Wander Creek Street with its historic wooden buildings and explore Tongass National Forest.

**Best for:** History and nature fans.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Royal Caribbean Norwegian, Regent, Oceania, Princess, Celebrity.

## SEWARD, ALASKA

This busy little port town with its fun, old-looking shopping strip is a cool base to explore, kayak or hike around the Kenai Fjords National Park. Visit the Alaska SeaLife Center, Seward Brewing Company or take a dog sled tour.

**Best for:** Nature lovers.

**Who goes there:** Silversea, Seabourn, Celebrity, Regent, HAL, Royal Caribbean.

## SKAGWAY, ALASKA

It's the end of the line for most Inside Passage cruises. Don't miss the Klondike Gold Rush National

Historical Park Visitor Center and the historic Red Onion Saloon.

**Best for:** Wanderers.

**Who goes there:** Princess, HAL, Seabourn, Carnival, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean, Silversea.

## CHARLOTTETOWN, CANADA

The shoreline boardwalk from Peake's Quay to Victoria Park is full of shops and restaurants, be sure to sample the seafood. *Anne of Green Gables* fans will love seeing the setting for the books.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Regent, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, Celebrity, Silversea, Princess.

## MONTREAL, CANADA

This multicultural city has French and British colonial roots. Stroll to museums, such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, galleries, The Underground City shopping tunnels, and enjoy quirky dining.

**Best for:** Culture and food lovers.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Oceania, Regent, Silversea.

## QUEBEC CITY, CANADA

The only walled city in the US and Canada, the charming French-flavoured city is easy to navigate on foot and abundant in culture, art and delightful sidewalk dining.

**Best for:** Culture and history buffs.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Oceania, Regent, Silversea, Cunard, Ponant, Royal Caribbean.

## VANCOUVER, CANADA

Vancouver has a busy waterfront, bustling downtown precinct and numerous museums, many catering to kids. Don't miss the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and the Grouse Mountain Skyride and Wildlife Refuge.

**Best for:** Families and art lovers.

**Who goes there:** Princess, HAL, Seabourn, Oceania, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean, Silversea, Crystal, Regent, Disney. 🐾

# Latin fiesta

// WORDS RODERICK EIME

While not a huge cruise destination, the vast South American continent presents myriad possibilities. The most popular cruises for big ship lovers typically sail between the major capitals of Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro with diversions to Sao Paulo and Ilha Grande for the “Brazilian Riviera”.

Other ocean lines swing by on round-the-world itineraries or on longer cruises out of the USA, while river cruise operators including Aqua Expeditions and Scenic explore the Amazon.

South America is best known for small-ship cruises to Antarctica, Galapagos or the Chilean Fjords. The population of Ushuaia swells in the height of summer with the crush of tourists heading to the Antarctic Peninsula.



Rio de Janeiro

## SOUTH AMERICA: PORTS

### BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Argentina’s cosmopolitan capital is full of atmospheric old neighbourhoods, European architecture, boulevards and parks. Visit the opulent 1908 Teatro Colón, colourful La Boca and the grand Recoleta and Barrio Norte. **Best for:** Culture and history lovers, soccer fans and romantics. **Who goes there:** Norwegian, MSC, Celebrity, HAL, Crystal, Seabourn, Regent, Princess.

### RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

There’s so much to see and do in Rio, try to arrange a day or two here. From Sugar Loaf Mountain cross the Tijuca rainforest by train, then climb to Christ the Redeemer on top of Corcovado. On the

way, stop by the Sambodromo, where renowned Samba schools perform.

**Best for:** Shoppers and beach bums.

**Who goes there:** Cunard, Norwegian, MSC, Celebrity, HAL, Crystal, Seabourn, Regent.

### SANTIAGO (VALPARAISO), CHILE

Santiago’s UNESCO-listed ocean port is the gateway to the Andes. Santiago, 90 minutes by road, has a wealth of museums and historic sites and is enjoying an urban culture revival with flash new hotels, restaurants and galleries.

**Best for:** Culture lovers and history buffs.

**Who goes there:** HAL, Seabourn,

Silversea, Princess, Crystal, Costa, Cunard, Norwegian, Ponant.

### LIMA, PERU

Hang out at fancy restaurants and plush hotels in the swanky Miraflores district, wander through the historic town centre and visit museums and archeological sites.

**Best for:** History and culture buffs.

**Who goes there:** Princess, HAL, Norwegian, Oceania, Regent, Silversea.

### MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

Montevideo has a mix of colonial and modern, art deco and neoclassical architecture thanks to Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French and British immigrants. The Museum of Visual Arts, the

90-year-old Palacio Salvo and the renovated Teatro Solís are all within a walk of each other.

**Best for:** History and culture buffs.

**Who goes there:** Cunard, Norwegian, MSC, Celebrity, HAL, Crystal, Seabourn, Regent, Princess, Ponant, Silversea. 🚢



St Vincent and the Grenadines

# Sail in the sun

// WORDS TERESA OOI

Last year, the Caribbean maintained its position as the world’s No. 1 cruise destination with a third of the market and 26.3 million destination arrivals. But it doesn’t hold the same appeal for Australians. In 2015, the number cruising in the region fell more than 10 per cent to 31,482.

There is no doubt why the Caribbean is so popular globally. There are 7,000 islands with blue seas, sandy beaches and luscious green forests. From bustling Barbados to pulsating Jamaica to St Maarten, it is an explosion of colours mixed with the

heady scent of rum and calypso music. Trinidad is a natural aviary where you can watch the bearded bellbird or the scarlet ibis, Trinidad’s national bird. In Dominica, take a hanging gondola over the Morne Trois Pitons National Park, kayak in St Lucia, swim under a waterfall in Grenada or with the dolphins in the Bahamas. You can even learn to scuba dive in Tobago. James Bond fans should have a martini at the Goldeneye Resort in Jamaica where Ian Fleming lived.

The Caribbean’s peak cruise season is October to April.



## CARIBBEAN: PORTS

### NASSAU, BAHAMAS

The largest port in the Bahamas, Nassau attracts about three million cruisers a year. Most ships dock at Prince George Wharf, adjacent to downtown Nassau. The wharf can accommodate seven ships at the same time. Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island is one of the world’s famous casino resorts. **Best for:** Fun lovers of all ages. **Who goes there:** Celebrity, Norwegian, Princess, Disney, Regent, MSC, Oceania, Costa, Silversea, Royal Caribbean.

### ST MAARTEN

The duty-free island is a shopper’s dream. Prices on electronics and liquor are low. Walk around the

capital city of Marigot, which is filled with chic boutiques.

**Best for:** Curious travellers.

**Who goes there:** Princess, Celebrity, MSC, Costa, Norwegian, Carnival, Azamara, P&O, Royal Caribbean, Silversea, Disney, SeaDream.

### ST THOMAS

Shop at Charlotte Amalie for duty-free bargains including jewellery, watches, china and alcohol. Take a cable car ride from the Paradise Point tramway for magnificent views of the bay.

**Best for:** Travellers of all ages.

**Who goes there:** Norwegian, Carnival, Disney, Royal Caribbean, Princess, SeaDream, Azamara, Viking.

### MONTEGO BAY

Duty-free shopping at its best especially in the city shopping precinct. Stroll down bustling Gloucester Avenue with its great shops and restaurants.

**Best for:** Travellers of all ages.

**Who goes there:** Carnival, HAL, SeaDream, MSC, Princess.

### OCHO RIOS

Ocho Rio beach has golden sand and crystal clear waters. Behind the beach, colourful market stalls sell everything Jamaican.

**Best for:** Fun-loving travellers.

**Who goes there:** Norwegian, Carnival, HAL, Princess, MSC, Crystal. 🚢



Nassau, Bahamas

OVATION OF THE SEAS

# OUR Aussie Fleet

Want to start your cruise close to home? There is a huge choice of cruise lines and ships on offer. *Bernadette Chua* reports.

The Australian market is the third largest in the world for cruising and in 2015 more than a million Aussies cruised either locally or to exotic destinations. Cruise lines are recognising this by sending the best of their fleet Down Under. We're spoilt for choice with the number of ships that we can cruise on. From family and mid-range to premium and ultra-luxe, check out the ships that homeport and sail to Australia.

## CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE

One of the most popular family cruise lines, Carnival's ships, *Carnival Spirit* and *Carnival Legend* offer something for the entire family. *Carnival Spirit* has the largest water park at sea in Australia, mini-golf, two-deck fitness centre, an adults-only area and more. It also has Guy Fieri's Burger Joint where guests can make their own American diner-style burgers. For the Mexican fiends, BlueIguana Cantina has a taco machine that can make 110 taco shells an hour. Guests can choose from chicken, fish, pork and beef tacos. *Carnival Legend* has some great features including the Green Thunder water slide and, for the foodies, the RedFrog Pub and Bonsai Sushi. [carnival.com.au](http://carnival.com.au)

## P&O CRUISES

P&O has the largest fleet in Australia with five ships sailing in the region. The line has taken a new approach with the roll out *Pacific Aria* and *Eden* in 2015. The new ships are modern and elegant, filled with beautiful furnishings and great restaurants. Australian celebrity chef Luke Mangan has been a long-term partner with P&O and guests can try his signature dishes at Salt Grill, such as liquorice parfait. Launching this June, *Pacific Explorer* will join the fleet. She'll have cool new water slides, a water park, new >

PHOTOGRAPHY: TIM FAIRCLOTH, ILOVECRUISING.COM.AU



bars, barefoot bowls, a poolside lobster and burger bar and more. [pocruises.com.au](http://pocruises.com.au)

**ROYAL CARIBBEAN**

The arrival of Australia's largest ship, *Ovation of the Seas*, was one of the biggest highlights last year. Hailed as the most technologically advanced ship, she hosts a range of wonders including the Bionic Bar where guests can get their favourite drinks mixed by a robotic arm, the FlowRider surf simulator, North Star viewing pod and SeaPlex, where guests can ride bumper cars. Dining choices include pasta at Jamie's Italian, a restaurant born from a partnership with the fast-talking British chef Jamie Oliver. At Wonderland, diners are given a gastronomical fanfare of food where nothing is quite what it seems. Think liquid lobster, cheesecake with apple and wasabi air, and vanishing noodles – just to name a few. Other ships in Royal Caribbean's fleet in Australia include *Voyager of the Seas*, *Explorer of the Seas* and *Radiance of the Seas*. [royalcaribbean.com.au](http://royalcaribbean.com.au)

**PRINCESS CRUISES**

Named the best cruise line in *Cruise Passenger's* Reader's Choice Awards, Princess Cruises has a number of ships sailing

around Australia and New Zealand. *Emerald Princess*, *Golden Princess*, *Dawn Princess*, *Sun Princess* and *Diamond Princess* are homeported here or visit ports in Australia. Princess is famed for its amazing food offerings and impeccable service. Australia celebrity chef Curtis Stone has partnered with the line and created SHARE by Curtis Stone with a menu designed around Australian produce and home-style cooking. For Broadway fans, Princess has an exclusive show produced by famed lyricist and Tony award-winning director Stephen Schwartz, *Magic to Do*, on selected Princess ships. [princess.com](http://princess.com)

**AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES**

The boutique cruise line is famed for its immersive experiences. Azamara has two ships, *Azamara Journey* and *Azamara Quest*, which offer an intimate experience and are small enough to navigate smaller and narrower waterways. The ships have recently been refurbished



**NORWEGIAN BREAKAWAY**

with the suites, spa and public spaces getting a fresh new look. [azamarclubcruises.com](http://azamarclubcruises.com)

**CELEBRITY CRUISES**

Luxury brand Celebrity Cruises has a large fleet of small ships as well as expedition vessels offering itineraries around Australia and New Zealand, Asia, South Pacific, South and Central America, the Galapagos and more. *Celebrity Solstice* regularly sails around Australia and was revitalised in October 2016. She has the first Lawn Club at sea, with real grass and its own gardener, as well as the first Hot Glass Show where guests can watch glassblowing on board. [celebritycruises.com.au](http://celebritycruises.com.au)

**OCEANIA CRUISES**

Oceania sends *Insignia*, *Sirena* and *Regatta* to Australia and New Zealand. *Regatta*, which will be arriving next year, has had a multimillion dollar refurbishment and has been decked out in

neoclassical furnishings, beautiful teak and stone work. She has eight lounges and bars and a state-of-the-art fitness and spa centre. Oceania marries old with the new. Guests can have afternoon tea at 4pm with a string quartet playing softly in the background while four-tiered pastry carts saunter past with freshly made finger sandwiches, petits fours, scones with clotted cream and desserts. [oceaniacruises.com](http://oceaniacruises.com)

**NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE**

In 2017, we'll see *Norwegian Jewel* homeported at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal. Her sister ship, *Norwegian Star* is currently sailing on a number of itineraries from Asia. Norwegian Cruise Line ships are distinguished by their colourful livery and on board, there are great specialty restaurants serving Black Angus steaks, Japanese Teppanyaki and fresh pasta. [ncl.com](http://ncl.com)

**VIKING OCEAN CRUISES**

Viking Cruises will be sending two of its ocean ships to Australia and New Zealand next year. Each ocean ship carries only 930 passengers and the Scandinavian-inspired decor is understated and elegant. Highlights include all-verandah suites, a retractable-roofed infinity pool, cinemas and specialty eateries including Manfredi's Italian. [vikingcruises.com.au/oceans](http://vikingcruises.com.au/oceans)

**CUNARD**

It's always a breathtaking sight to see a Cunard ship sail into an Australian harbour as part of their long-haul and round the world journeys. The line's three Queens – *Queen Mary 2*, *Queen Victoria* and *Queen Elizabeth* have all been refreshed and updated. More suites have been added and the architects and interior decorators have revived *QM2* with regal reds and art-deco furnishings, much like the

original *Queen Mary*. The line has even have updated the kennels for your canine passengers (on transatlantic sailings) – there's a New York fire hydrant and lamp post from London for the pooches to relieve themselves. [cunardline.com.au](http://cunardline.com.au)

**CRYSTAL CRUISES**

Ultra-luxe Crystal Cruises, known for its private planes and exclusive yachts, sails two of its ships around Australia – *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony*. On board, you'll be served champagne and caviar by your private butler, dine on dishes by the famous chef Nobu Matsuhisa, explore ports with Crystal's detailed shore-excursion program or relax at the Crystal Life Spa. But if you fancy something a little quieter, Crystal is creating a fleet of five river ships to sail the Rhine, Rhone, Moselle and Main rivers in Europe. The first, *Crystal Mozart*, is sailing on the Danube River. [crystalcruises.com](http://crystalcruises.com)

**REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES**

Last year, Regent Seven Seas launched "the world's most luxurious ship" – the lobster and caviar are on tap. The ship also has a \$200,000 bed made out of horse tail hair (the Queen of England also has one) and all of the glass on the chandeliers is hand blown. Regent sends *Seven Seas Navigator* and *Seven Seas Voyager* to Australia and New Zealand and on board, guests stay in all verandah suites, sip on top-notch cognac in the Connoisseur Club or watch cabaret shows in the Constellation theatre. [rssc.com](http://rssc.com)

**SEABOURN**

The luxury line's latest ship, *Seabourn Encore* was christened in Singapore in January, and sailed straight to Australia and New Zealand. She'll be returning to our waters in December. Designed in rich woods with plush furnishings, *Encore* is the epitome of modern elegance.

Seabourn has also organised a number of keynote speakers including former prime minister Julia Gillard and Pulitzer-prize winning journalists. Also on board is a specialty restaurant by Michelin-starred American chef, Thomas Keller. [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)

**SILVERSEA**

White-gloved butlers and amazing shore excursions, Silversea has ocean ships that sail to the major ocean ports in Australia and New Zealand, as well as an expedition ship in the Northern Territory and Queensland. The 120-guest *Silver Discoverer* has all ocean-view suites as well as 12 Zodiacs for guests to explore isolated shores and wetlands. *Silver Whisper* has four eateries where guests can dine on continental and regional food at The Restaurant or feast on Italian dishes at La Terrazza. There is also a spa, library and beauty salon. [silversea.com](http://silversea.com)



**OCEANIA CRUISES**



**CURTIS STONE**

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES MORGAN