



Experts predict: Where cruise will grow in 2015

THE ASIA CRUISE scene is on the cusp of dramatic growth, according to industry experts. In 2015, twenty-six cruise lines will operate a total of 981 cruises through the region, with short itineraries between 2-6 nights making up 80 per cent of demand.

In November last year, the Asia Cruise Association, which has now become CLIA Southeast Asia, estimated the total Asia market could grow to four million in 2020, up from 1.3 million passengers in 2012.

ASEAN Cruise News spoke to industry experts including the Director General of Tourism Malaysia; the CEO of Carnival Australia; Star Cruises; Royal Caribbean; the Singapore Cruise Centre and the Singapore Tourism Board who assured us 2015 will be an exciting time for cruise in all categories.

[See more here.](#)

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Relaxing rules for big ships

DICKSON CHIN believes One of the biggest challenges facing Asian ports is to develop a stream-lined immigration policy for a smooth and fast processing system, says Dickson Chin, managing director of Wallem Ship Agency, one of the biggest shipping agencies in the world.

Chin speaks exclusively to ASEAN Cruise News about the

faces in attracting cruise ships to regional ports. "To attract more ships to the region a stream-lined immigration policy should be developed by Asian nations, offering something similar to US/Caribbean and EU.

"This issue remains the most complicated challenge for cruise lines and shipboard personnel," Mr Chin said. [See more here.](#)

Take a look inside Quantum of the Sea's designer shopping mall

Retail therapy takes on a whole new meaning onboard Royal Caribbean's Quantum of the Seas. We take a sneak peak into the ship's designer retail offerings. [See more here.](#)





Country spotlight: Malaysia

WHEN MALAYSIA coined the phrase “Straits Riviera” to reflect its beautiful coast, it was a name squarely focused on attracting cruise lines to call at its ports.

It has some bold aims: generate M\$1.75 billion in gross national income and create 10,000 jobs by 2020.

And it is looking like it is on target, given many of today’s growing Asian cruise itineraries involve Malaysian ports. Four out of nine journeys offered by Royal Caribbean, for instance, involve Kuala Lumpur.

The Malaysian government has thrown its strong support behind new port developments, infrastructure upgrades and improving coastal towns and cities to make them more attractive as cruise destinations.

The aim is to entice international cruise lines to expand their itineraries and include multiple Malaysian ports given growing competition from



neighbouring countries, the Oxford Business Group’s latest report on Malaysia says. The OBG is a research publishing firm founded in 1994 by Oxford graduates. It publishes intelligence reports covering 34 countries around the world from its offices in London, Istanbul and Dubai.

At the recent Global Tourism Economic Forum in Macau, Tourism Malaysia chairman Tan Sri Dato’ Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen said the government wants to turn Malaysia into

one of Asia’s largest port hubs.

“Malaysia is developing and upgrading our hubs for cruise tourism and the Government is supportive of making Malaysia the main cruise tourism playground of the East,” she said.

This has led to the formation of the Malaysia Cruise Council (MCC) in 2012, an advisory committee comprising of representatives from both public and private sectors including the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Ministry of Transport and local authorities. [See more here.](#)





Myanmar brothers launch lux cruise

A NEW LUXURY cruise with a local twist, has just been launched to tap into Myanmar's booming river cruise market.

Sanctuary Ananda, a five-star river ship which will cruise the Irrawaddy and Chindwin in Myanmar, was built by two Myanmar brothers, U Soe Naing and Myo Aung.

Born in a farming town Nyaunglebin, about 160 kilometres from Myanmar's capital city, Yangon, the two brothers fell into ship building by accident.

Their mother and grandmother laboured long hours in rice fields while their father was a builder.

U Soe Naing originally trained as a civil engineer but struggled to support his family of seven siblings. He retrained as a radio officer on merchant ships before he decided to go into construction with his brother.

Their big chance came when a friend, Paul Strachan, the



U Soe Naing and his brother Myo Aung

Scottish founder of Pandaw River Expeditions asked them to restore an old ship into a river cruiser.

The brothers then went on to build other new cruise ships and have never looked back.

"My brother and I are Buddhists," U Soe Naing told a British newspaper.

"The goal of Buddhism is to get to Nat Pan Na (a peaceful place).

This is achieved through

living a good life and meditation, a philosophy that is reflected in the ship. It's the kind of place I would dream of staying myself."

The contemporary interiors have been furnished with local fabrics and lacquer ware with high tech amenities including an iPod docking station, iPad television connectivity and Wi-Fi in every suite.

[See more here.](#)





15 minutes with...Dr Birute Galdikas

Dr Birute Galdikas, global perspective guest speaker of Lindblad Expeditions talks exclusively about her passionate involvement with 300 orphan orangutans in the remote Tanjong Puting Reserve in Indonesian Borneo

Q. When you are discussing this with cruise passengers, do you find they empathise with the plight of animals easily?

Cruise passengers seem to empathise greatly with the orangutans, especially when they visit the free-ranging ones at Camp Leakey and then the orangutan orphans at the Care Center. The orphans seem to have a huge impact! I have literally seen passengers cry with joy and gratitude when they were with the young orphan orangutans at the Care Center!

Q. Do you think the kind of immersion experience cruise passengers get helps wildlife conservation? And if so, how?

Orangutans are their own best ambassadors! The immersion experience of passengers changes



wildlife. In the case of orangutans, to look into the eyes of one of our closest relatives on the planet and have those eyes gaze back at you, unblinking and serene, as though you were looking into a mirror of your own soul has a profound effect on passengers!

Q. Do Asians react differently to other groups?

Asians already have their own unique relationship to nature which encompasses

which encompasses a spiritual element that may be very strong. Also, Asians have many complex cultures that were established thousands of years ago.

Q. Are Asian tourists interested in saving the orangutans?

It is hard to generalize but conservation does not seem to have the same general cultural urgency for Asians.

[See more here.](#)





Training: Investment or expense?

Former general manager of the Asia Cruise Association and travel agent trainer for the cruise industry, Kevin Leong, discusses the benefits of providing cruise training for agents.



Is training an investment or an expense? The answer may be obvious to many, but in practice the bottom line dictates the opposite. In my two years with the Asia Cruise Association (ACA), now known as Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Southeast Asia and CLIA North Asia, there were two main objectives: providing cruise training to Asian travel agents and developing more Asian ports of call.

The rationale for training was simple enough – applying the proven formula from the developed cruise regions of Europe, the USA and Australia to Asia by training the front line marketers to understand the cruise product so that they can push the cruise holiday option far beyond what individual lines can do.

This training was initially provided in an adhoc and opportunistic manner at industry

opportunistic manner at industry platforms such as Cruise Shipping Asia Pacific, ITB Asia (both in Singapore), ITE Hong Kong, at Seatrade All Asia Conference in Shanghai etc.

After I came onboard, we crafted a one-day training programme and in the first year, we conducted cruise training in Manila, Jakarta, Semarang, Delhi and Mumbai. The plan for the second year was more ambitious – to run the training seminars twice a year in similar cities so that the learning could progress with new modules to expand the travel agent's knowledge and build their confidence in

and build their confidence in the cruise product. We also extended the programme to cover Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Cebu.

The training was provided at the ACA's expense and we rented the seminar rooms, provided F&B in the conference package, flew in the trainers or tapped on local cruise representatives.

The turnout was pretty decent for a new business segment and opportunity that we were offering to agencies used to selling traditional air/land tour packages: 25-35 agents on average in each city. [See more here.](#)



The number of cabins added to the world wide cruise fleet up to 2017

*Source: cruisemarketwatch.com