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PASSPORT FEES UP??

The State Department plans to increase the new passport-application fee from \$100 to \$135 (and renewals up from \$75 to \$110) and introduce a new \$82 fee to add visa pages to the books. The changes, which a top official from the department defended, could take effect within weeks. Brenda Sprague of the State Department said costs have been increasing because of high-tech features on new passports. Critics have blasted the proposed fee increase as "irresponsible" and "unacceptable."

OUR CRUISE OF THE YEAR SAILS IN 2011....

Two years ago, we advised our readers that the upcoming cruise of the year was the RCCL Around the Horn 56 day repositioning cruise of the **Mariner of the Seas**. We are now following that up with the advice that the circumnavigation of Australia is its equivalent in 2011.

Under the leadership of the Argonti's and the Budd's (who lead our group around the Horn) we have once again reserved group space on The

RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS SAILING February 17th 2011 from Sydney, Australia\

- 17-Feb [Sydney, Australia](#) 6:30 PM
- 18-Feb Cruising
- 19-Feb [Brisbane, Australia](#) 7:00 AM 6:00 PM Dock
- 20-Feb Cruising
- 21-Feb [Airlie Beach, Qld, Australia](#) 7 AM 5 PM Tend
- 22-Feb [Cairns, Australia](#) 10:00 AM 9:00 PM Tend
- 23-Feb Cruising
- 24-Feb [Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea](#) 8A-5P Dock
- 25-Feb Cruising
- 26-Feb Cruising
- 27-Feb [Darwin, Australia](#) 7:00 AM 10:00 PM Dock
- 28-Feb Cruising
- 01-Mar Cruising
- 02-Mar [Broome, Australia](#) 7:00 AM 6:00 PM Dock
- 03-Mar Cruising
- 04-Mar [Exmouth, Australia](#) 7:00 AM 5:00 PM Tend
- 05-Mar Cruising
- 06-Mar [Perth \(Fremantle\), Australia](#) 6:30 AM

The ship sails Northwest and counterclockwise around Australia with stops at Brisbane, Airlie Beach, and Cairns before hopping North to Port Moresby , New Guinea. Moving West the next stop is Darwin, followed by Broome, Exmouth and Perth.

Next stop is Sunbury, and then as the ship heads Southeast to Albany, Adelaide, and Burnie. No cruise to the land downunder would be complete without a visit to new Zealand as well,



so with a stop at Hobart Tasmania, she heads to Milford, Doubtful, and

Dusky Sounds in New Zealand before stopping at Dunedin and Christchurch and making a final call at Wellington before heading back to Sydney.

This 35 night spectacular cruise is sure to be the highlight of the cruising season in 2011 and we welcome aboard any interested clients and friends.

NEW CRUISE SHIPS DUE

This year IS SEEING the delivery of several interesting new ships, a new Queen Elizabeth(Cunard) and Nieuw Amsterdam (Holland America), both named for famous Transatlantic liners, and two brand new designs, Marinaby Oceania and Le Boreal by Compagnie du Ponant, each the first edition of a pair.



Holland Americas very Nieuw Amsterdam !

There will also be new deliveries for Costa and P&O. And all of the above from Italian shipbuilder, Fincantieri.

Other new order have been placed by Carnival, two from Princess, all three also from Fincantieri, and one, maybe two, from MSC. From another yard.

ALASKA GOVERNOR IS CONCILIATORY - JUST A LITTLE

Gov. Sean Parnell on Friday proposed cutting the tax voters imposed on cruise-ship passengers by 25 percent.



In return for the tax cut, cruise-ship executives have agreed to drop their federal lawsuit to repeal the tax and send more ships to Alaska, he said.

The agreement was forged during a roundtable discussion between Parnell and about a dozen cruise-line executives in Miami on Tuesday, according to people who attended the meeting.

The tax rollback is a reaction to the cruise lines' decision to pull ships from Alaska this summer, which has caused some Alaskans to lose work, the governor said.

The governor's proposal, which must be approved by the Legislature, would reduce the tax from \$46 to \$34.50 per passenger. Alaska voters approved the \$46 tax in 2006.

NEW TV AT SEA SERVICE AVAILABLE

MTN Satellite Communications (MTN) has launched MTN Worldwide TV, the industry's first TV broadcast service delivering programming from six major U.S. and international television networks to cruise ship passengers anywhere on the high seas.



With MTN Worldwide TV, passengers are able to enjoy programming from BBC World News, CNBC, Fox News, MSNBC, Sky News and Sky Sports News in their cabins while at sea or in port, with no interruption. Additional programming packages, including entertainment and sports channels, are to be added in the near future.

MTN owns the huge antenna balls you see on most cruise ship and provides worldwide communications for cruise ships to stay in touch with their owners. The MTN services also provide "cellular-at-sea" and internet web connection at sea.

PORT EVERGLADES SET SINGLE DAY RECORD

The Port of Miami may be the Cruise Capital of the World, but neighboring Port Everglades may soon be a strong rival for that title.

That's because Saturday, Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale broke a world record by processing 52,000 passengers sailing in and out of the port.



It helps that Oasis of the Seas, the world's largest cruise ship, is docked at the port.



Once the numbers are officially tallied and it is confirmed that Port Everglades has achieved those figures, they will break their own single-day world record previously set on Saturday, January 3, 2009. That's when 49,234 passengers sailed in and out of Port Everglades with 11 cruise ships.

"One of the things is that we have more cruise berths, while Miami has a higher volume of passengers because of year-round sailings and shorter cruises, Port Everglades can handle more ships and more people at one time. We're not striving to be the biggest cruise port in the world, we're striving to be the best," said Ellen Kennedy, spokeswoman for Port Everglades.

NCL TO EXPAND AND MODERNIZE GREAT STIRRUP CAY



NCL, which pioneered the “private Island” concept when it opened Great Stirrup Cay in 1977, has announced that it will invest \$20,000,000 in renovating and expanding the facility. The island, which is located in the Berry Islands Chain of the Bahamas is some 130 miles East of Fort Lauderdale.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BOOK A NEXT CRUISE

Several cruise lines have announced price increases for the 2010 and 2011 seasons. It is abundantly clear that the days of unprecedented good buys are long in the past. There are still “good buys” available but the inventory of same is shrinking rapidly.

A good example is the Transatlantic fall repositioning cruises for 2010.. these are in many cases almost sold out , a factor of extreme popularity with frequent cruisers.

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