



Classic International Cruises

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Athena Cruises Into Its Longest and Most Successful Season Ever for Classic International Cruises in Australia

Athena's cruise program in Australia this summer is the longest and most successful season here yet for Classic International Cruises, with business up seven per cent and a repeat passenger rate of up to 50 per cent.

The 550-passenger Athena - Australia's only traditional liner - is visiting Eden (January 31), Sydney (February 1) and Melbourne (February 3) as part of Classic International Cruises' first-ever round-trip voyage from Adelaide to NSW and Victoria. The classic-styled liner is based in Adelaide and Perth each summer as the only cruise ship serving the SA and WA markets with seasons of round-trip cruises.

Athena's 2011/12 Australian summer program is the cruise line's eighth successive season in Australia's west since 2004 and the fourth for Athena. The season is the longest ever for Classic International Cruises by 35 days, extending more than six months from November 15, 2011 to May 24, 2012, with Athena making a record 33 calls to Australian ports this summer, including 17 in WA and seven in SA.

"Despite increased competition and more tonnage than ever sailing in Australian waters, Classic International Cruises is enjoying its busiest season ever here, with business up seven per cent on last year and our repeat passenger rate running at between 30 and 50 per cent on every cruise," said Classic International Cruises Managing Director for Australia, Grant Hunter "Our classic-styled product is different and unique and we are the only line that is committed to the Adelaide and Perth markets every year," Mr Hunter said.

"Unlike big new ships filled with distractions, Athena offers a return to traditional ocean cruising with personal, old-fashioned service, fine cuisine, affordable fares and an uncrowded, warm and relaxed atmosphere that you only get on a smaller vessel," he said. "We still use streamers at bon voyage parties, escort passengers to their cabins and offer free visits to the bridge. It's a high successful formula for us and people from around Australia are travelling to SA and WA to experience it. And we'll be back next summer for another extended season in Australia sailing from Adelaide and Perth, with new ports such as Robe in SA and Portland in Victoria."

The 11/12 summer season for Athena offers 15 cruises lasting from two to 40 nights to and from Perth and Adelaide, including CIC's first cruise from Perth to Japan – the line's longest-ever round-trip itinerary from Australia (38 nights) – the line's first-ever line voyage from Perth to Europe via South Africa instead of the Suez Canal and Athena's first visits to Darwin, Broome and Geraldton as part of a round-trip cruise from Perth to Bali and Christmas Island.

Originally a transatlantic liner, the Portuguese-registered, 16,000-ton Athena features a wrap-around promenade deck, traditional wooden deck chairs, a pool, fitness centre and sauna, five bars and lounges, nightclub, cinema, showlounge, library, boutiques, cinema and two restaurants. And each of the 276 spacious cabins offers a full-sized bath – a luxury only found in suites on the latest superliners.

Fares for the 2011/12 season start from \$450 per person, twin-share, for a two-night cruise aboard the 550-passenger Athena, with children under 18 cruising for free on selected cruises, with only nominal taxes to pay. And supplements for solo travellers in selected cabins are as low as 25 per cent, instead of double. The currency onboard Athena is Australian dollars.

Bookings are via travel agents. For information, visit www.classicintercruises.com.

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