



Classic International Cruises

Editorial Overview of Athena and her 2011/12 Australian Season

ATHENA - The Classic Cruising Experience

Classic International Cruises will offer its eighth successive and longest-ever season in Australia this summer (2011/2012), with the return of the line's stylish flagship, Athena.

Calls to Sydney, Darwin, Japan and South Africa are among a season of firsts for Classic International Cruises' liner this summer, which will also see Athena cruise from Adelaide again by popular demand.

Classic International Cruises will offer 15 cruises lasting from two to 40 nights to and from Fremantle/Perth and from Adelaide. This will be Athena's third season of cruises from the South Australian capital after the success of Athena's first seasons there in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The 2011/12 Australian summer program – the longest ever for Classic International Cruises by 35 days – will be the cruise line's eighth successive season in Australia's west since 2004 and the fourth for Athena. The season, extending more than six months from November 15, 2011 to May 24, 2012, will feature:

- A return season from Adelaide, with Athena offering five cruises to and from the SA capital, including round-trip itineraries, in January and February, 2012. The 30-day Adelaide program will be the longest-ever season for an Adelaide-based liner. CIC was the first line to ever base a ship in SA in 2008.
- CIC's first cruise from Fremantle to Japan, including the line's longest-ever round-trip itinerary from Australia– a 38-night cherry blossom voyage to Japan, The Philippines, China, Malaysia and Indonesia
- The first-ever round-trip cruise from Adelaide to Sydney
- CIC's first-ever line voyage from Fremantle to Europe via South Africa instead of the Suez Canal, with visits to Mauritius, Reunion Island, Ascension Island, the Canary Islands, St Helena Island and Morocco
- Athena's first visits to Darwin, Broome and Geraldton as part of a round-trip cruise from Fremantle to Bali and Christmas Island. This will be the first time Darwin has featured in a return CIC cruise from Fremantle and will represent a return to the northern WA coast for the cruise line, which last included Broome in 2006
- A maiden sail-past for CIC of the seabird-rich Abrolhos Islands off WA – the southern-most coral reefs in the Indian Ocean - as part of a Christmas cruise to Christmas Island and Bali

Fares for the 2011/12 season start from \$450 per person, twin-share, for a two-night cruise aboard the 580-passenger Athena, with children under 18 cruising for free on seven selected cruises next summer, with only nominal taxes to pay. And supplements for solo travellers in selected cabins are as low as 25 per cent, instead of double. And Classic International Cruises is also one of the few cruise lines to allow single travellers to share cabins to lower the fare. The currency onboard Athena is Australian dollars, adding to the savings.

“Our eighth successive season in Western Australia in 2011/12 and, by popular demand, our return to South Australia, underscore Classic International Cruises’ strong and ongoing commitment to the growing Australian cruise market,” said Classic International Cruises Managing Director for Australia, Grant Hunter.

“This summer we will again offer our highly successful formula of traditional cruising on a real ocean liner, affordable fares, attractive itineraries, fine cuisine, friendly and personal service and a warm and relaxed atmosphere that you only get on a smaller vessel,” Mr Hunter said.

“Between one third and half of all our Australian passengers have sailed with us before, which underlines our appeal and success. Onboard passenger surveys also show that 92 per cent of passengers rate their Athena cruise last season as very good to excellent, with the onboard service, dining experience and entertainment singled out for the highest scores, which is a great endorsement of our unique product.”

In contrast to the rapid growth of ever-expanding resort-type superliners, with their rock climbing walls, flying foxes, skating rinks, rides, boxing rings and long queues, Classic International Cruises offers a return to what it calls the ‘Classic Cruising Experience’ where crew escort passengers to their cabins on embarkation and know their names throughout the cruise in an intimate, friendly and relaxed setting.

In fact, attentive, old-fashioned service from the Australian and international crew and first-class cuisine are the hallmarks of the Classic Cruising experience, according to Mr Hunter. “It’s cruising as it was meant to be, with a sense of the ocean and all its mystery, adventure and nautical traditions, and that special personal touch often lacking in today’s hectic age,” he said.

The elegant Athena, registered in Portugal, is stylishly traditional and solidly-built liner purpose-built for blue-water ocean cruising.

Athena is smaller than most cruise ships today, carrying just 580 discerning guests, but therein lays her appeal. She is easy to get around and boasts a special warmth and charming ambience – an authentic home-away-from-home with a rewarding camaraderie that only smaller vessels can provide.

Many like the convivial atmosphere onboard to that of an English country pub – cosy, informal and welcoming. Guests return to their ‘other’ homes refreshed and relaxed with an address book brimming with the names of new friends.

Onboard, guests enjoy lazy days at sea and the many pleasure of shipboard life. Sip cocktails by the pool, take a turn around the Promenade Deck, enjoy a gym work-out, feast on fine cuisine, catch a cabaret show or a movie, lounge in the piano bar and let your hair down in the disco – all the feel-good things that provide the perfect getaway at sea.

And then there's the ever-changing scenery. Unpack just once and a host of exciting destinations appear on the horizon.

Our ships have delighted European passengers for 27 years. For the past eight years, the line's Funchal (every summer from 2004-2007) and Athena (ever summer from 2008/09) have wowed more than 60,000 Australians, with many repeat guests bringing back friends and family to live it up at sea together.

Funchal's success in Western Australia from 2004 to 2007 led to the debut in the summer of 2008/09 of the line's biggest liner, Athena in Fremantle and also Adelaide, where Athena was the first ship to offer round-trip cruises from the SA capital. The popularity of Athena's first three seasons in WA has paved the way for her fourth successive season here this summer for her 2011/12 program.

Named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and originally a transatlantic liner, the 16,144-ton Athena was completely rebuilt as a cruise ship in 1994 at a cost of US\$150m and refurbished in 2005. The mid-sized, eight-deck ship features a wrap-around promenade deck, many traditional wooden deck chairs, a pool, fitness centre and sauna, five bars and lounges, nightclub, showlounge, casino, library, boutiques, cinema. internet café, formal and casual restaurants and 276 spacious cabins – all with a shower and bathtub - a luxury only found in suites on the latest superliners around the world. All 43 suites, including eight balcony cabins, have jacuzzi baths.

Children's activities operate during school holidays and fares include all gratuities, enhancing the value for money Athena offers passengers.

* According to the latest [Berlitz Guide to Cruising](#), considered the 'Bible' of cruising: 'This sturdily built ship (Athena) is really one of the old classics that has been lovingly maintained and holds a special charm for those not seeking the newest large resort ships.'

** List of 2011/12 Australian summer cruises from Perth and Adelaide follows...*

20011/12 Australian Summer Cruise Season for Classic International Cruises Aboard Athena

A total of 15 cruises will be offered:

Ten Cruises to and from Fremantle

(Eighth consecutive summer season from WA for Classic International Cruises)

- 33-night line voyage from Rome to Fremantle, sailing November 15, 2011, from **\$4995**
- 12-night Christmas cruise to Christmas Island and Bali and passing the Abrolhos Islands, departing Fremantle December 18, 2011, from **\$2250**
- 3-night New Year's ocean cruise to 'nowhere', from December 30, 2011, from **\$775**
- 5-night cruise to Albany and Esperance, dep January 2, 2012, from **\$1095**
- 2-night ocean cruise to 'nowhere' from January 7, 2012, from **\$450**
- 11-night return cruise to Bali for an extended three-day stay, dep January 9, 2012, from **\$2095**
- 2-night weekend ocean cruise from Fremantle to 'nowhere' on February 18, 2012, from **\$450**
- 16-night round-trip cruise from Fremantle on February 20, 2012, for Christmas Island, Bali, Darwin, Broome and Geraldton from **\$2995**
- 38-night line return 'Cherry Blossom' voyage from Fremantle on March 7, 2012, for 11 ports in Japan, The Philippines, Malaysia, China and Indonesia from **\$5995**. Shorter 19-night sectors are also available to or from Japan.
- 40-night line voyage from Fremantle on April 14, 2012, to Portsmouth in the UK via South Africa and islands in the Indian and Atlantic oceans, from **\$6995**. Shorter legs are also available to Cape Town or from Cape Town to the UK

Five Cruises to and from Adelaide

(Third summer season from Adelaide for Classic International Cruises)

- 5-night cruise from Fremantle to Adelaide via Esperance from January 20, 2012, from **\$945**
- 3-night Australia Day cruise, sailing return from Adelaide on January 25, 2012, visiting Port Lincoln on Australia Day and Kangaroo Island, from **\$655**
- 8-night round-trip cruise from Adelaide on January 28, 2012, with visits to Sydney, Eden and Melbourne, from **\$1520**
- 7-night round-trip cruise from Adelaide to Burnie, Port Arthur and Hobart in Tasmania from February 5, 2012, from **\$1375**
- 6-night Valentines cruise from Adelaide to Fremantle from February 12, 2012, calling at Port Lincoln and Esperance, from **\$1135**

All fares are per person, twin-share

Founded in 1982, Classic International Cruises carries 200,000 passengers a year, with the five-ship fleet (Athena, Princess Daphne, Princess Danae, Arion and Funchal) offering cruises in Europe, the UK, South America, Asia and, since 2004, Australia.

Athena will return again to Australia for the summer of 2012/13.

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

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