



P&O Races Towards a Record 2018 with First Ever Melbourne Cup Cruise from New Zealand

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P&O Cruises is stepping up the cruise pace in New Zealand, sailing on its first Melbourne Cup Carnival voyage from Auckland this November ahead of a record-breaking season in 2018.

Pacific Jewel's 10-night cruise to the world famous Emirates Melbourne Cup race event will be a highlight of P&O's inaugural spring cruise season in New Zealand, with the 2000-guest superliner sailing on a series of roundtrip cruises from Auckland between September, 1 to October, 31, this year.

The cruise will see 2000 New Zealand racing fans form part of a 6000-strong contingent of P&O guests travelling to the Melbourne Cup Carnival with cruise fares including admission to the Cup and transfers in Melbourne.

Speaking in Auckland today, P&O Cruises President Sture Myrmell said the Melbourne Cup Carnival cruise was representative of the wider variety of cruises now on offer to New Zealand holidaymakers thanks to P&O's longer deployments in Auckland.

"While Pacific Pearl and Pacific Jewel will sail on a total of 15 cruises from Auckland this year, next year that figure will grow by almost 50 per cent to 22 roundtrip cruises as we base Pacific Jewel here for an unprecedented six months," Mr Myrmell said.

"Not only will we be providing New Zealanders with the biggest ever selection of cruise holidays from their doorstep, we'll also be injecting valuable dollars into the local economy with guest and crew spending, provisioning and port charges expected to contribute around \$25 million into the local economy.

"It's all part of our commitment to investing in New Zealand and bringing more choice to the market."

Mr Myrmell said next year's cruise season would include a record eight short SeaBreak cruises of two to three nights, as well as 12 longer Pacific Island itineraries.

"Next year we're set to carry a record 45,000 Kiwis on cruises from Auckland, up from 36,000 this year, so we can't wait to show more New Zealanders just how relaxing and enjoyable a holiday at seas can be."

Mr Myrmell said he expected the Melbourne Cup Carnival cruise to be a winner given close to 10,000 Kiwis choose to travel to the racing event each year.

Guests on the cruise will enjoy a celebration of all things racing, with racing personalities and aficionados leading racing-themed activities, meet-and-greets and Q&A sessions with fans during the 10-day cruise, which includes a flight home from Sydney.

Victoria Racing Club CEO Simon Love said New Zealand had always played a key role in the success of *'the race that stops two nations'* .

"New Zealand horses have enjoyed great success at Flemington over many years, with 43 New Zealand bred horses having won the Cup," Mr Love said.

"The number of New Zealanders heading to the Melbourne Cup Carnival has increased by more than 40 per cent since 2013 which shows there is a growing appetite amongst the Kiwi population for the racing, fashion, colour and atmosphere of the Melbourne Cup Carnival," Mr Lowe said.

With accommodation and meals all included in the cruise fare plus transfers and entry to the races, cruising to the Melbourne Cup with P&O is a great value way to experience the race that captures the heart of New Zealanders and Australians nationwide.

Fares for Pacific Jewel's 10-night Melbourne Cup cruise start from \$1,342 per person quad share including entry and transfers to the Melbourne Cup.

For more information visit pocruises.co.nz, call 0800 78 0716 or see a licensed travel agent.

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About P&O Cruises

Sailing local waters for almost 85 years, P&O is Australia and New Zealand's only homegrown cruise line and the largest cruise operator in the region, offering a fleet of five ships cruising year round from eight home ports in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. With a contemporary look and feel, P&O's ships carry more than 460,000 guests a year on great value holidays. Itineraries range from short getaways and cruises exploring the Australian coast to longer holidays to the South Pacific and exotic destinations such as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Asia. In June 2017 P&O Cruises will welcome its latest ship, Pacific Explorer, while in 2019 it will take delivery of its largest ever ship, a 3000-guest, 113,000-tonne vessel which will be the biggest ship ever to be based full time in Australia.