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# CruiseNews

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WORDS: BEN CONNOR

## Generation Games

Cruise lines pull out all the stops for families.

Caravan parks and family-friendly hotels and resorts are the preferred family getaway for many, but not for long, if cruise lines have anything to do with it. Considerable effort is being put into refashioning cruise ships to attract the family market, with recent initiatives including increasingly age-specific kids' clubs, the latest gaming technology, extravagant water slides, sentimental family entertainment and hands-on educational adventures.

Carnival Cruise Lines will be basing *Carnival Spirit* in Australia for the coming wave season – the ship arrives in October this year. With a capacity for 2,667 (2,124 double occupancy) passengers and approximately 930 crew, the ship will be the first the cruise line has based in Australian waters. Carnival's ads have been on high rotation and the ship is being tweaked for a summer of Aussie cruising – with a particular focus on Aussie families. (See story on page 48.)

Paul Gauguin Cruises is offering some exciting experiences for children in French Polynesia this winter. Teaming up with oceanographer and environmentalist Jean-Michel Cousteau and his Ambassadors of the Environment program, these cruises will have kids aged nine to 17 hiking rainforest trails, visiting ancient

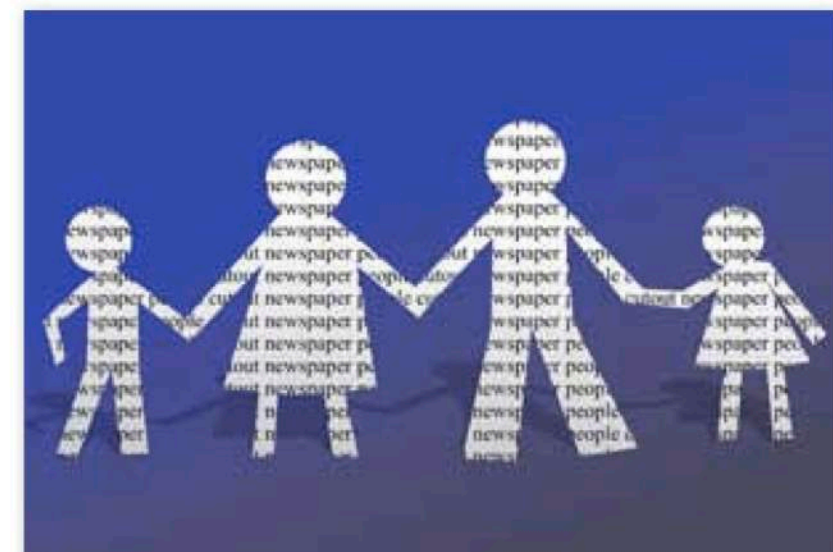
Polynesian temples, diving coral reefs and more while learning about local geography, ecology and culture.

MSC Cruises arguably trumps the rest, however, with free travel for kids younger than 11 and reduced rates for kids aged 11 to 18. The cruise line has also recently revitalised its kids' club, now offering four programs tailored to specific age groups: Mini Club for 3- to 6-year-olds, Junior Club for 7- to 11-year-olds, Y-Team for 12- to 14-year-olds, and MSC Generation Teen Club for 15- to 17-year-olds.

Youngsters can now write and draw for the new kids' newspaper;

teen areas feature Xbox Kinetic and Nintendo Wii; and pagers and beepers are now available to rent for passengers who have children aged three to five or children with medical conditions or special needs.

All the while, Disney continues to generate fresh family entertainment, recreation and dining options that aim for maximum emotional impact. And when Norwegian Cruise Line's 4,000-passenger *Norwegian Breakaway* debuts in April 2013, its Splash Academy, spanning two decks, will be the largest youth- and teen-dedicated facility in the line's fleet.



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<p><b>NEW ZEALAND EXPLORER</b> 14 nights on <i>Radiance of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 17 Nov* 2013: 21 Jan, 20 Feb* <small>*Port order varies.</small></p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIA'S TOP END</b> 16 nights on <i>Radiance of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 12 Oct 2013: 6 Mar</p>	<p><b>SOUTH PACIFIC SPLENDOUR</b> 10 nights on <i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 18 Dec*, 28 Dec*, 30 Dec* 2013: 1 Feb*, 1 Mar <small>*Ports of call &amp; port order varies. *A similar cruise operates in reverse on <i>Radiance of the Seas</i>.</small></p>
<p><b>TROPICAL QUEENSLAND</b> 11 nights on <i>Rhapsody of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 18 Nov, 7 Dec, 20 Dec* 2013: 18 Feb, 23 Mar, 9 Apr* <small>*A similar 10 night cruise operates in reverse on <i>Radiance of the Seas</i>.</small></p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIA &amp; NZ JOURNEY</b> 18 nights on <i>Voyager of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 5 Nov 2013: 19 Feb* <small>*A similar cruise operates in reverse.</small></p>	<p><b>NEW ZEALAND ADVENTURE</b> 14 nights on <i>Voyager of the Seas</i> Departs 2012: 24 Nov 2013: 27 Jan* <small>*Cruise operates in reverse.</small></p>

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Exact itineraries are subject to change at any time. ABN 541 5026 3086.