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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' award-winning onboard enrichment programme, Vistas – an added attraction on selected cruises

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines offers a host of great facilities and a varied daily programme of activities aboard its fleet of four, modestly-sized cruise ships – *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch*. An added attraction, on selected cruises, is the award-winning onboard enrichment programme, *Vistas*, which won Fred. Olsen the accolade of 'Best for Learning' in the prestigious *Cruise International Awards* for two years running, in 2011 and 2012.

This programme offers a wide range of different topics, hosted by experts in their respective fields, who join the cruise and give talks, lectures, tuition and

accompany shore excursions related to their subject. The programme features some very well-known names from the worlds of politics, gardening, antiques, wine and much more.

Amongst those hosting this exciting and informative programme for 2013 will be TV presenter and food and wine expert, Jilly Goolden, making her second appearance on a Fred. Olsen cruise. Jilly will be a host on *Braemar's* 'Wine Regions of Bordeaux and Rioja' cruise in 2013. The 10-night cruise, M1325, departs from Dover on 4th October 2013, and visits Nantes (France), La Pallice (for tours to La Rochelle, France), Bordeaux (France), Getxo (for tours to Bilbao, Spain), Aviles (Spain) and La Coruna (Spain), before returning to Dover.

Best known for presenting top-rated TV series, *Food and Drink*, for almost 20 years, Jilly appeared alongside the late Michael Barry OBE, Chris Kelly and fellow 'oenophile', Oz Clarke. She became nationally famous as the most widely-known wine expert in Britain, and is now a regular on *Britain's Best Dish*.

Gardening is another very popular hobby with Fred. Olsen guests, and they have welcomed several celebrity gardeners aboard in recent years. For 2013, gardening stars will include the popular TV gardening expert, Charlie Dimmock. Charlie will be hosting the *Braemar* cruise 'Gardens of Madeira & the Canaries' that departs from Dover on 22nd April 2013, for 14 nights. The islands of the Canaries contain many stunning gardens and are home to a huge variety of exotic plant life, some species being unique to this region. Charlie will help guests learn more about gardens and gardening with entertaining and engaging talks.

For the first time, *Vistas* will host Round-the-World yachtswoman, Tracy Edwards, in 2013, who will be speaking on 'The Great Explorers' aboard *Balmoral's* 'Spain, Portugal & Gibraltar Explorer' cruise, L1311, of 12 nights, departing from Southampton on 11th August 2013. Tracy is a renowned motivational speaker and, during this Iberia cruise, she will talk about explorers who have inspired her on her own adventures.

On a very different topic, former MP, author and celebrity Edwina Currie will be hosting an Iberia cruise, with a ballroom dancing theme, based on her experience as a contestant on BBC's 'Strictly Come Dancing.' Edwina will be joining Fred. Olsen's 'Strictly Spain and Portugal' cruise aboard *Black Watch* in

2013.

This Iberian cruise, W1321, is for eight nights and departs from Dover on 16th November 2013. The itinerary includes some of the most attractive Portuguese and Spanish ports: Lisbon, the cosmopolitan and elegant capital of Portugal; Leixoes, for tours to Oporto, home of the world famous port industry; then, the great Spanish ports of Vigo and La Coruna, in the lovely Galicia region of northern Spain. Three days at sea during this cruise allow plenty of time for guests to enjoy the ballroom dancing theme, hosted by the irrepressible Edwina.

Born and brought up in Liverpool, Edwina is best known nationally for her years as Minister in the Department of Health under Margaret Thatcher. She is also a best-selling author and has appeared on numerous radio and TV programmes since leaving politics.

Fellow MP Julian Critchley once said: “Edwina has a brass neck, a silver tongue and a golden pen”, while former colleague, Matthew Parris, wrote, “Edwina is the best communicator the Tories have”. She will, no doubt, make a fascinating and highly entertaining *Vistas* host.

One of the most popular and long-standing hosts of *Vistas* is antiques expert and regular on the *Antiques Roadshow*, Lars Tharp. Lars brings his expertise to bear on *Balmoral's* ‘The Art of the Mediterranean’ cruise of 14 nights, L1316, departing from Southampton on 27th September 2013, and visiting ports in Spain and Portugal.

These are just a few of the many and varied hosts and topics offered by *Vistas*. The onboard activity is offered at no extra charge to guests (although there may be a small cost for wines in the case of wine tastings.) Guests can take part in any *Vistas* themed activity and there is no need to pre-book.

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

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