



NEW FACILITIES, ATTRACTIONS BOOST FAR EAST



Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore can accommodate two megaships simultaneously.

Asia's cruise business celebrated a major milestone on October 22, when Singapore officially opened its Marina Bay Cruise Centre – a facility that can serve the largest megaships to date. The ceremony coincided with the simultaneous call of two such megaships, the *Diamond Princess* and *Voyager of the Seas*. Cruise Business Review Publisher **TEIJO NIEMELÄ** enjoyed a first-hand look at the new terminal, as he was one of those arriving aboard the *Voyager of the Seas* from Laem Chabang, Thailand.

Foschi. And Costa is not the only Carnival company betting on the Asian market: Princess Cruises will operate its 77,000 gross ton *ms Sun Princess* in the Japanese source market next spring. When Cruise Business Review asked Princess about its plans for Japan beyond 2013, Princess President and CEO **Alan Buckelew** said, "It's too early to tell."

Meanwhile, Asian operator Star Cruises will also increase its presence in mainland China. The Asian brand has already oper-

Photo credit: Teijo Niemelä

"Chinese love to try new things, and want to buy always the latest products and top labels in the marketplace," explained a Chinese fashion journalist from Shanghai, who was on her first cruise. The *ms Voyager of the Seas* was repositioning from Tianjin, China, to Australia via Singapore after its inaugural season in China. The 137,300 gross ton and 3,114-passenger *Voyager* replaced the half as large *ms Legend of the Seas* serving mainland China, and will be joined by a younger sister, the *ms Mariner of the Seas*, in 2013.

Royal Caribbean International is not the only cruise line boosting its presence in Asia and especially China. Costa Cruises is going to double its fleet in Asia, and will soon introduce the 85,700 gross ton *ms Costa Atlantica* to the market to complement the slightly smaller and older 75,200 gross ton *ms Costa Victoria*. Costa's parent company Carnival Corporation & plc has decided to establish headquarters in Singapore for its Asian operations, which will be led by Costa Chairman **Pierluigi**



Gardens by the Bay and Marina Bay Sands integrated resort (backgrounds) are closest attractions to the Marina Bay Cruise Centre.



Gardens by the Bay is part of the new district, which will become a new downtown of Singapore.

ated seasonally from Sanya, Hainan Island, with its 50,700 gross ton ms SuperStar Aquarius, but when her sister ship the ms SuperStar Gemini re-enters service after a \$50 million refurbishment in January 2013, that will give Star the ability to begin seasonal operations from Shanghai, competing side-by-side with Royal Caribbean and Costa.

Cruise Business Review has also learned that MSC Cruises has finally, after many years of hesitation, decided to enter the Chinese market. One option MSC has looked at closely is to operate one of its smaller ships year-round from Shanghai. The benefit of this arrangement is the ship would fit in Shanghai and would not need to use the Baoshan terminal outside the city, where megaships do their turn-arounds. However, a year-round operation would also make MSC vulnerable to typhoon season.