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ISSUE 110 | APRIL/MAY 2022

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TRADE NEWS



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HYDROGEN

HOPE

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In conversation with CLIA's director
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Contents

APRIL/MAY 2022



REGULARS

- 6 The Briefing**
The latest news in the cruise sector
- 9 Column**
Fred Olsen's Geoff Ridgeon shares his thoughts on the line's Grand Voyage
- 10 Sales inspiration**
Training, incentives and support
- 12 Travel agent tips**
Tricks of the trade, direct from fellow agents
- 18 Spotlight on**
Portsmouth Port's cruise masterplan
- 26 At a glance**
Explore inside *Seabourn Venture*
- 33 Win at selling**
Tap into demand for UK expeditions
- 50 The last word**
Cunard's Angus Struthers on welcoming *Queen Anne*

FEATURES

- 14 Making waves**
Ambition is running high at Ambassador Cruise Line
- 20 CTN investigates**
The case for hydrogen power
- 24 Wave Awards 2022**
Now is the time to enter and win
- 28 In conversation with**
CLIA Europe's Marie-Caroline Laurent
- 34 Cruise newcomers**
What's on board the latest ships
- 36 River cruising**
Why the Rhine is preparing for a halcyon period
- 42 Destination focus**
The ecological wonderland of the Galápagos Islands
- 46 Cruise review**
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Editor's Letter

WELCOME TO THE APRIL/MAY ISSUE

Back in late March, I travelled to Budapest for the CLIA RiverView 2022 conference. While this wasn't the first industry-specific in-person event to be held since the easing of restrictions, it was my reintroduction to CLIA gatherings – and what a three days it was.

Aside from the joy of exploring the city and many ships, one of the most pleasing parts of the trip was the ease of travel. There were no pre-departure tests, locator forms or piles of documents to concern myself with.

All I needed was my passport; it felt, dare I say it, like it used to. I had forgotten how travel soothes my soul and puts a smile on my face. While some destinations still have restrictions in place, there is a general trend toward hassle-free travel once again.

As for the meat and bones of the event, education, sustainability and longer itineraries are the river trends to keep an eye on. As CLIA UK & Ireland chair Ben Bouldin said in Budapest: "We know that river has an innate ability to immerse people in a destination... there is an opportunity to grow river cruise." You can read more about this in our coverage in The Briefing.

The final part of our special series on sustainability leads us to investigate the use of hydrogen, while our key interview is with Marie-Caroline Laurent, who last year was



Above: Entries for The Wave Awards 2022 are now open

appointed director general for CLIA in Europe. Laurent has bold plans, not least in developing the sector's engagement with regulatory powers and governments.

We also take a closer look at Portsmouth Port's cruise plans and speak to Ambassador Cruise Line.

Enjoy. Until next time.

Gary Peters

Editor, Cruise Trade News

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Cruise Trade News

The Briefing

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION FOR CRUISE NEWS

IN BRIEF

Cruise Challenge start

● The Cruise Challenge – organised and hosted by CTN – is back with live events for 2022. The unique gameshow will travel the country far and wide, with events to be held throughout the year. Contact suzanne.halil@realresponsemedia.com for more information.

Grandiosa in Southampton

● MSC Grandiosa will sail from Southampton for spring/summer 2023. The MSC Cruises ship will operate 23 cruises, including mini cruises to Rotterdam and Bruges, as well as longer voyages taking in the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands.

APPOINTMENTS



Princess Cruises has announced the appointment of **Eithne Williamson** to the role of VP UK and Europe, starting late June. Williamson will replace Tony Roberts, who recently joined Seabourn as global VP, commercial operations and head of UK and Europe.



APT is to welcome **Brad Bennetts** as its head of sales and business development. He will start his new role in early June, replacing Jessica Shelton-Agar, who left APT to move to the Middle East in January after 10 years with the brand.



Agents learn about new itineraries and sustainability initiatives. Photo: Steve Dunlop

CLIA RIVERVIEW 2022 Education & sustainability

At the 2022 CLIA RiverView conference, held in Budapest at the end of March, agents were urged to “rediscover river”, as the sector looks to rebound from the pandemic.

The theme for this year’s event was designed to remind, reinvigorate and renew, with a keen eye on the future as lines push ahead with ship launches, new technology and longer itineraries.

Education was a key theme, with Uniworld president and CEO Ellen Bettridge saying: “We need innovation to inspire people to travel; agents need to share their experiences and encourage clients to dream.

“Many clients still need to be educated on why to choose a river cruise, so we need to provide options and listen.”

One itinerary where there will be plenty of chance to explore is Uniworld’s new 43-day itinerary, taking place in 2023, and described by the line as the “world’s most exotic river and land journey”, which UK MD Chris Townson

explained “reflects the clear trend we are seeing of customers booking back-to-back river cruises”.

Investing in the future

Sustainability was also key to the agenda. A-Rosa UK MD Lucia Rowe was keen to stress the need for agents to understand what is being done to reduce emissions.

“If we don’t protect destinations, there’s nothing to sell,” she said. “You [travel agents] have to be ready, as one day a customer will choose a holiday based on sustainability.”

A-Rosa’s new ship, *Sena*, will use hybrid power to operate on battery power when approaching a port, and Rowe outlined a plan to have a fully hybrid-powered fleet by 2030.

To help agents, CLIA river cruise lines have created a mentorship programme. To date, 10 lines have joined the scheme, and agents who sign up will be assigned a mentor. That, coupled with the fact that clients are eager to splash the cash, puts the agent and river cruise relationship in perhaps its strongest position ever.

THE NEWS YOU NEED

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P&O's summer 2024 cruises focus on offering extended time in many destinations

ITINERARIES

P&O reveals summer 2024 plans

P&O Cruises has said it will offer “extended time in many destinations to maximise the new programme of tailored shore experiences” as part of its summer 2024 programme.

New ship *Arvia*, which joins the fleet in December 2022, will offer two 14-night western Mediterranean itineraries, each with six ports of call. *Iona* will continue to spend the summer in the Norwegian fjords for seven-night itineraries, visiting the World Heritage port of Geiranger, as well as Olden and Alesund.

Britannia, meanwhile, will operate seven-night Norwegian fjords and 14-night western Mediterranean island cruises to the Balearics. Malta will be the homeport for *Azura*’s summer season of seven and 14-night voyages, including western and eastern Mediterranean cruises, while *Ventura* will operate short breaks to Amsterdam.

Aurora and *Arcadia* will offer longer itineraries, including a 16-night Iceland cruise with an overnight call in Reykjavik and a 30-night Canada and USA cruise.

NEW SHIPS

Celestyal ‘keen’ to boost fleet

Celestyal Cruises is actively looking to add to its two-ship fleet, the line’s chief commercial officer Leslie Peden has confirmed.

In November 2021, the cruise line agreed a deal with Searchlight Capital Partners, a global private investment firm, for an injection of money to “amplify its brand globally”, and Peden says it is now in a position to “consider opportunities” to expand the fleet, which currently consists of *Celestyal Crystal* and *Celestyal Olympia*.

Speaking to *CTN*, Peden explained: “The immediate priority will be the renewal of the existing fleet, and then we



Leslie Peden plans to renew Celestyal's fleet and then expand it

will consider opportunities to add to the fleet beyond that.

“It won’t be new builds, but it’ll be newer tonnage, with a higher mix of balcony and premium suite accommodation. Our existing fleet does not have enough of the higher stateroom categories to satisfy demand.

“They [the new ships] will be similar mid-size [to the existing fleet], probably in the 1,500-passenger range. This will support plans for year-round cruising.”

MARKETING GURU



Accord Marketing chief client officer **Maria Payne** looks at what reference points the cruise sector should use in 2022

As we mark the two-year anniversary of a global pandemic and roll up our sleeves for a (fingers-crossed) plain sailing season ahead, it raises the question – what is the most suitable reference point for cruise data going forward?

Throughout 2021, 2019 served as the only valuable benchmark to note growth and compare key periods of seasonality. However, as we cross over that two-year threshold of disruption, should we still be looking back three years to 2019 for clarity, or is it time to mark 2021 as a representation of ‘the new normal’ and a better benchmark in a market where the disruptive dust from the pandemic has not yet settled?

“Is it time to mark 2021 as a representation of ‘the new normal’?”

The answer is both. 2022 didn’t start how we hoped with the Omicron variant affecting the beginning of cruise’s traditional wave season.

And so, with seasonality already disrupted, this is no ‘normal’ year either. Going forward, cruise brands should continue to review progress on a month-on-month basis to note short-term growth and monitor against both 2019 and 2021 on a wider level to see whether traditional peaks are taking shape again, and whether 2022 really is the year that we bounce back for good.

Adversity is inevitable but our passion pushes us forward.

RISE TO THE OCCASION.





In his regular column for CTN, Fred Olsen Cruise Lines head of sales **Geoff Ridgeon** explains the virtues of exploring a particular part of the globe

I can't quite believe as I write this that we have somehow found ourselves well into spring. It seems only yesterday I was putting pen to paper to welcome you into 2022, and now we are seeing longer days, shorter nights and summer is just around the corner.

And what those hints towards warmer temperatures also bring with them is a real yearning for a holiday, which means now is a great time to capitalise on making those bookings.

You will find some customers have a little more to play with now, having saved so much at a time when we could do so little. There will also be those who will now prioritise travel over other outings, having really felt the absence of exploring new destinations, new cultures and experiences.

Either way, more and more people are looking to spend a little more to make the most of their time travelling, with many

keen to get those big trips booked and really make the most of being able to explore the world again.

A magical alternative

Of course, we can't all commit to packing up our bags and setting sail on a world cruise (we can dream though, right?) but a great alternative could be a Grand Voyage. These are longer cruises, typically between one and three months, that focus on exploring a particular part of the world.

We at Fred Olsen recently unveiled our 93-night The Intrepid Beauty of Africa and the Indian Ocean Grand Voyage, offering chances to explore many well-known destinations such as Cape Town and Mumbai as well as the lesser-known gems of Mombasa, Kenya, and Toamasina in Madagascar.

On board, we will celebrate the joy of the journey with an entertainment and enrichment programme centred around the destinations, shining a spotlight on nature, history and culture.

There is such a sense of community on these cruises, as guests share their experiences with like-minded travellers.

Every cruise line will have their own way of making their voyages unique to them and, while I know I say it every time, what is key here is matching your customer to the best cruise line for them. This is arguably more important for these longer duration cruises than for any other.

Whether it is the first or fifth time a customer books such a voyage, it is so important to make it feel special every time. Grand Voyages are a big investment, both in terms of time and money, and so we must treat every booking as though it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Until next time. 🌐



GEOFF RIDGEON

HEAD OF SALES
FRED OLSEN CRUISE LINES

“We must treat every Grand Voyage booking as though it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience”

Sales *Inspiration*

INCENTIVES • ITINERARIES • SPECIAL OFFERS

CELEBRITY REVEALS MED 2023 PLANS

Celebrity Cruises will sail year-round in the Mediterranean from 2023.

The line will operate itineraries from September 2023 through to March 2024 on *Celebrity Infinity*, the only Celebrity ship sailing in the region all year round. The ship will start the winter season on nine and 10-night itineraries featuring the best of the Iberian Peninsula.

Rotating between setting sail from the ports of Barcelona and Lisbon, guests will visit destinations such as Palma de Mallorca and Seville. From October 2023 to January 2024, *Celebrity Infinity* will cruise from Barcelona on 11 and 12-night itineraries, returning to Morocco for the first time since 2008.

Infinity will then return to Greece in February and March 2024 for 10 and 11-night itineraries.



Flamenco dancers perform regularly in the Plaza de España in Seville

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Royal Caribbean International's new app will help agents with bookings and offer benefits too

ROYAL UPDATES AGENT APP

Royal Caribbean International has developed a new app for travel agents in the UK and Ireland.

The Club Royal Plus app – which links to the Club Royal UK and Ireland trade platform – has been designed to make “agents’ lives easier”, the line said, providing information they need to sell Royal Caribbean cruises.

The new concept will launch in two phases, with the first focused on exclusive news and

notifications, as well as flash sales and competitions.

Meanwhile, phase two will include training modules as part of a new knowledge hub. Agents will be able to progress and complete the modules to advance through the membership tiers and increase their benefits, including unlocking additional ballots for prizes and incentives such as ship visits.

The app will also use facial recognition for ease of access.



UK travel agents can now make bespoke bookings across A-Rosa's collection of European cruises

A-Rosa takes 'big step forward'

A-Rosa has partnered with Aviate to offer ATOL-protected packages to the trade.

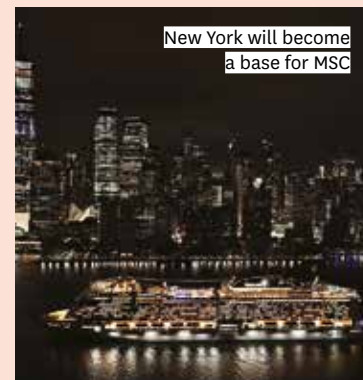
The partnership means that for the first time travel agents in the UK will now be able to make bespoke package bookings through A-Rosa across the line's whole collection of European river cruises.

The operator added that it is looking to "exponentially expand its reach in the UK market as part of its growth strategy". Aviate, which is part of the

Travel Innovation Group, will now act as A-Rosa's trade reservations department in the UK, handling all stages of the booking process and bonded under Aviate's ATOL licence.

A dedicated new reservations number has been set up, which agents will be able to call to make their clients' package bookings.

In addition, agents will be able to book packages for all types of clients – such as multi-generational groups.



MSC in the Big Apple

MSC Cruises will base one of its ships in New York and operate year-round sailings from the city for the first time.

MSC Meraviglia will homeport in New York from April 2023 for cruises to the Caribbean, Bermuda, New England and Canada. Caribbean itineraries of either seven or eight nights will feature calls to Nassau and Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve – MSC Cruises' private island in the Bahamas.

Six-night Bermuda itineraries will offer three days docked at King's Wharf, while Northern American itineraries of 10 or 11 nights will stop in Boston, Portland, Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island, among other destinations.



HAL guests can have extra peace of mind about cancelling a booking

HAL EXTENDS FLEXIBILITY PLAN

Holland America Line has extended its flexible cancellation plan to cover bookings made up to 31 May 2022.

Any guests who make a new booking by that date for itineraries that depart on or before 30 September 2022 can cancel for any reason and receive a future cruise credit in the amount of any cancellation fees that normally would be incurred. The line confirmed that cancellations must

be made up to 30 days before the departure date.

Beth Bodenstainer, HAL senior VP and chief commercial officer, said: "By extending the date our guests need to book their cruise under our Worry-Free Promise, it will allow them to take advantage of some great limited-time special offers with the peace of mind that if they change their plans, they can still take a cruise at a later date."

The Knowledge

We speak to travel agents to discover their tricks of the trade and how they sell cruise holidays. This time it's the turn of Panache Cruises cruise connoisseur **Emma Taylor**



EMMA TAYLOR

Panache Cruises

How do you ensure loyalty among your clients?

There are a few main ways to do this. First, share open and honest communications with them; always deliver what you say you will, and understand customers' specific needs and remember these each time you speak with them. If you can achieve those, then a client will return time and time again for the personal service.

How do you upsell your cruise clients?

The best way to do this is to show clients the benefits of an upgrade and breakdown what it will really mean to their experience on board. That way clients will appreciate the impact it will have on their holiday.

What do holidaymakers expect of a travel agent in today's world?

They expect knowledge. That may be of the cruise line, the flights, the destinations or the current climate that they are travelling in. This has never been more apparent than today, with the protocols and requirements for travelling throughout the pandemic.

How do you target new-to-cruise clients?

Social media is a great way to attract new-to-cruise clients, as you can be very visual with promotional materials and information. It also gives you the



“Social media gives you the opportunity to bring the experience to life for someone who has never cruised before”

opportunity to bring the experience to life for someone who has never cruised before.

Are there any unique requirements of selling luxury cruises?

The biggest requirement is knowing your product. If you don't know the cruise lines well, then you're unable to successfully match your clients' requirements and they could, regrettably, end up with a bad experience. The small details are what can make the biggest difference, so understanding these is key.

What's your most effective method of targeting potential cruisers and why?

The website is key. You can drive people to visit the website in various ways, but the information on the website must be accurate, easy to read and easy to navigate. Once a customer is on the

website there are so many ways that you can impact their experience using videos and pictures to ensure that they get excited about their next cruise.

What's the number one travel agent must-have?

Confidence. You've got to be confident in what you are selling and in the knowledge that you are doing the best for your customer.

In your opinion, how is the role of a travel agent evolving?

People are looking for more tailor-made holidays and so you need a wider understanding of how the industry as a whole works. Gone are the days when holidaymakers would book direct from a brochure with a package laid out in front of them. As an agent now, you need to be more aware of every detail. 📌

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BOLD AMBITION

As its first ship launches, Ambassador Cruise Line CEO **Christian Verhounig** tells CTN how the line intends to engage with travel agents and discusses the possibility of a third ship



Guernsey is one stop on the British Isles Discovery trip celebrating the diversity of the coastline

What are the highlights of *Ambience's* maiden season?

There are various highlights – sailing from our iconic homeport of London Tilbury is one of them. We're the only cruise line offering year-round turnaround sailings from the terminal. It's such an easily accessible port for our guests to get to via various methods of public transport with ample parking.

We're proud to offer ex-UK, no-fly sailings for our guests. This ease of travel also means there's limited queuing, unlike airports, and no baggage limits. *Ambience's* maiden season also has an itinerary to suit everyone. There are sailings from two to 42 nights that offer a range of destinations from the British Isles, Norway, Greenland, Iceland and the Mediterranean to further afield destinations such as Canada and Cuba.



Christian Verhounig

CEO
AMBASSADOR CRUISE LINE

How will your destination experiences stand out among the crowd?

To help our guests make the most of their time ashore, a number of experiences have been created. This may be a guided visit to a must-see tourist attraction in an iconic city, a small group experience designed to explore off-the-beaten-track locations, or an unguided transfer to allow guests to explore independently.

Where possible, and in liaison with our local agents and tourist offices, Ambassador is also committed to researching and developing sustainable experiences to introduce during the season. As part of our national charity partnership with ORCA, we are also sending our booked guests pre-cruise communications advising them not to consume whale and dolphin meat during their destination experiences.

What makes Ambassador's approach to trade relationships unique?

We understand and appreciate the value that our trade partners have, and we fully recognise the potential that they hold now, and as we grow. They're integral to our commercial progression and expansion as a company with their customer networks and extensive product knowledge.

We also fully embrace a multi-channel approach to sales and distribution and our team are always busy building personal relationships. In addition, we're conscious of price parity and we never undercut our agents – we offer a unique financial protection model for agents.

How has the trade reacted to your agent concession scheme, announced earlier this year?

To date, we've had more than 40 concession requests. It's encouraging to see so many agents wanting to experience what we have to offer. Visiting *Ambience* and being immersed in Ambassador's offering really builds agents' confidence. We've experienced such positive buy-in to the brand since launch.

How do you intend to build trade partnerships moving forward?

There are plans to expand our trade team to offer more one-to-one support. We'll educate through fam trips, introduce



With sailings from two to 42 nights, *Ambience's* maiden season has an itinerary to suit everyone



Greenland's sweeping landscapes and small rural settlements await Ambassador guests



online learning programmes and offer cooperative marketing support. There will be rewards for agents through future booking incentives and competitions, as well as an extensive programme of ship visits on *Ambience* and *Ambition* when she arrives in the UK in 2023. We want this to be a collaborative relationship.

In terms of on-board offering, will *Ambition* differ from *Ambience*?

For *Ambition*, we will retain all the core elements that we have on *Ambience*, including our entertainment programme, bespoke craft classes and bridge. The food and beverage offering may differ slightly to due to the layout and spaces available on board.

Will you expand your itineraries with departures from non-UK ports in the future?

Ambience will sail from London Tilbury and *Ambition* will offer a summer 2023 programme of regional departures from ports such as Newcastle, Dundee, Belfast, Liverpool, Bristol and Falmouth.

“We understand and appreciate the value our trade partners have. We never undercut our agents”

We're always reviewing additional departure ports in the UK that will offer our guests a wider cruising experience and are also looking into potential expansions into other national markets and national departures. There is high demand for what Ambassador is offering in other markets around the world.

Since Ambassador entered the market, you've moved at quite a pace. Should we expect the announcement of a third ship soon?

We have been transparent that we have ambitious growth plans and are always reviewing vessels that may be available to join the fleet. When these opportunities arise, we will announce them. Until then – watch this space. 📍

I AM HERE

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Norway's Fjordland

7 nights Spring Saver Fare from only **£629pp**

Ambassador Fare from: **£849pp**

Departing London Tilbury 16 October 2022

Eidfjord - Cruise Hardangerfjord - Bergen
- Flam - Cruise Sognefjord & Aurlandsfjord -
Haugesund

Also available:

6 August 2022 - 7 nights -
from **£649pp** Multi - Generational

25 August 2022 - 7 nights -
from **£649pp**



Isle Of Syke, Scotland

British Isles Discovery

11 nights Spring Saver Fare from only **£989pp**

Ambassador Fare from: **£1,335pp**

Departing London Tilbury 3 April 2023

Kirkwall (Orkney Isles) - Invergordon (Scotland)
- Portree (Isle of Skye) ⚓ - Tobermory (Isle of Mull) ⚓ - Belfast (Northern Ireland) - Cobh for
Cork (Republic of Ireland) - St. Mary's (Isles of Scilly) ⚓ - St. Peter Port (Guernsey) ⚓ - Le
Havre (France)

Also available:

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13 August 2022 - 12 nights -
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1 September 2022 - 11 nights -
from **£1,149pp**

⚓ Land by launch or tender

Discover our new 2022 Trade Concessions and Ship Visits

Offers subject to availability and may be withdrawn without notice. For terms and conditions visit www.ambassadorcruise.com. -Multi-generational sailing, please note there are no dedicated children's facilities on night. Discounts vary by cruise and by grade. Book by 8pm 18 May 2022. *Price is per person based on Spring Saver Fares, with two adults sharing a twin cabin, unless stated as single or Ambassador Fare. 250 limited full refund. Cruise Holidays booked with Ambassador Cruise Holidays Limited, trading as Ambassador Cruise Line, are financially protected in accordance with the Package Travel and Linked Arrangements Regulations. All fares and availability correct at time of supplying artwork.

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£61pp per night



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⚓ Land by launch or tender



Tromsø, Norway

Land of the Northern Lights

11 nights Spring Saver Fare from only **£949**pp

Ambassador Fare from: **£1,295**pp

Departing London Tilbury 23 March 2023

Kirkwall (Orkney Isles) - Torshavn (Faroe Islands) - Reykjavik (Iceland) - Invergordon (Scotland)

Also available:

Norway's Land of the Northern Lights -
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- Refund Guarantee*
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Ambience is our first ship and carries approximately 1,400 guests, creating a welcoming and social atmosphere. She is 70,285GRT, with 798 cabins, five restaurants, two cafes, nine lounges, swimming pool, promenade decks, a spa, day and evening entertainment, fitness and leisure facilities complemented by enticing enrichment and lifestyle programmes.

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board. Prices are per person based on Spring Saver Fares, with two adults sharing a twin cabin, unless stated as single or Ambassador Fare. Fares excludes gratuities at £6pp (£5pp on cruises of 16 nights or more) per offer twin cabins and capacity controlled across sailings. Prices shown have full discount already applied, discount may vary by cruise and grade. *In the event of your cruise being cancelled, you will be guaranteed a 2018. Copyright 2022 Ambassador Cruise Line is a trading name of Ambassador Cruise Holidays Limited. Ambassador Cruise Holidays Limited is a company registered in England and Wales. Registered number: 13299365.

Ref: 217

Spotlight On

Portsmouth's masterplan

Portsmouth International Port passenger operations manager **Andrew Williamson** discusses the port's grand vision to make it a cruise hub

Our ambitious 20-year vision for the future of Portsmouth Port is to grow the port's capacity to handle additional, larger ships, making space for a sustainable future featuring environmentally led developments and shore power.

Through market analysis from independent experts and extensive stakeholder engagement, we have reliable insight into the cruise sector's future. Within the next five years, we will have extended our primary cruise berth to accommodate ships over 300m in length, with the ability to use multiple berths. Our terminal extension will also have been completed so we can manage the additional passengers.

The port is a city-owned port, and as the UK's most successful municipal port it provides a significant income for essential services. We are looking to create a leading marine and maritime city, which is attractive for people to live, work and enjoy themselves in. The masterplan is forecast to generate £357m economic benefit for the city, £739m nationally and more than 5,500 jobs locally within 10 years – a vital boost for the maritime sector.



“We are in discussions about scaling upwards for larger vessels”

History at guests' fingertips

Portsmouth lends itself effortlessly to the cruise market, from world-class attractions to a major sheltered harbour close to the main shipping channels. It almost sounds boastful but when you have figures like Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling once based in Portsmouth, Henry VIII's seafront bolt-hole, and of course Horatio Nelson's *Victory* and the scenes of historic, epic experiences, it's a location that makes cruise calls an easy operation.

Our highly anticipated terminal extension is underway, and we're excited for the profile this will bring. We aim to set the bar high for passengers from the start of their adventure. We are about bold sustainable plans, not platitudes, and want to work with customers who share our vision. This is hugely important to us; we will be open and transparent with our air quality monitoring data. This means investing in the latest technology to capture what's happening at the port.

We've teamed up with scientists and academics to turn the port into a living laboratory to trial the latest in environmental power prototypes, and we expect to become a net energy provider through our solar PV projects across the whole site and the introduction of wind turbines.

In addition, we are also fortunate to use integrated services such as the city's park and ride operation, which helps us manage capacity and more importantly helps us maintain our environmental standards.

We have a prototype smart dual chemistry battery, funded by Innovate UK, which means by the summer we'll be able to provide shore power for smaller ships.

The next step is to scale upwards for larger vessels and we are in discussions about how to achieve this. We have backing for capital funding and continue to work with the Department for Transport on plans.

As for agents, they are critical and we are looking to host industry executives later in the year. Our port is always open; that's one thing about us in Portsmouth – we're always happy to chat. 🗨️



ANDREW WILLIAMSON
PASSENGER OPERATIONS MANAGER
PORTSMOUTH PORT



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Your clients will visit marquee cities, UNESCO world heritage sites and hidden yacht harbours when they cruise Seabourn's Extraordinary Mediterranean.

They'll enjoy all this and more... elegant settings for meals and bistro-style dining alfresco with complimentary premium spirits and fine wines included; intuitive and personalised service provided by staff passionate about exceeding expectations; the world-class Spa at Seabourn, sparkling pools; spacious decks and private veranda suites from which to take in the sun and scenery.



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- Intimate ships with a private club atmosphere
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- Complimentary premium spirits and fine wines available on board at all times
- All ocean-front suites, luxuriously appointed
- Welcome Champagne and complimentary in-suite bar stocked with guests' preferences
- World-class dining, further enhanced through a culinary partnership with Chef Thomas Keller
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SOME OF OUR EXTRAORDINARY OFFERS

7-Night Classic Greek Isles & Ephesus

11, 29 May; 26 Jun; 24 Jul*; 21 Aug;
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Piraeus (Athens) to Istanbul Fly/cruise from £3,799pp*

- US\$600 per suite onboard spend
- Inclusive Economy Air
- Seabourn's Classical Concert at Ephesus

*Lead fare based on 24/7/22

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Seabourn Sojourn Civitavecchia (Rome) to Barcelona

Fly/cruise from £3,199pp*

- US\$300 per suite onboard spend
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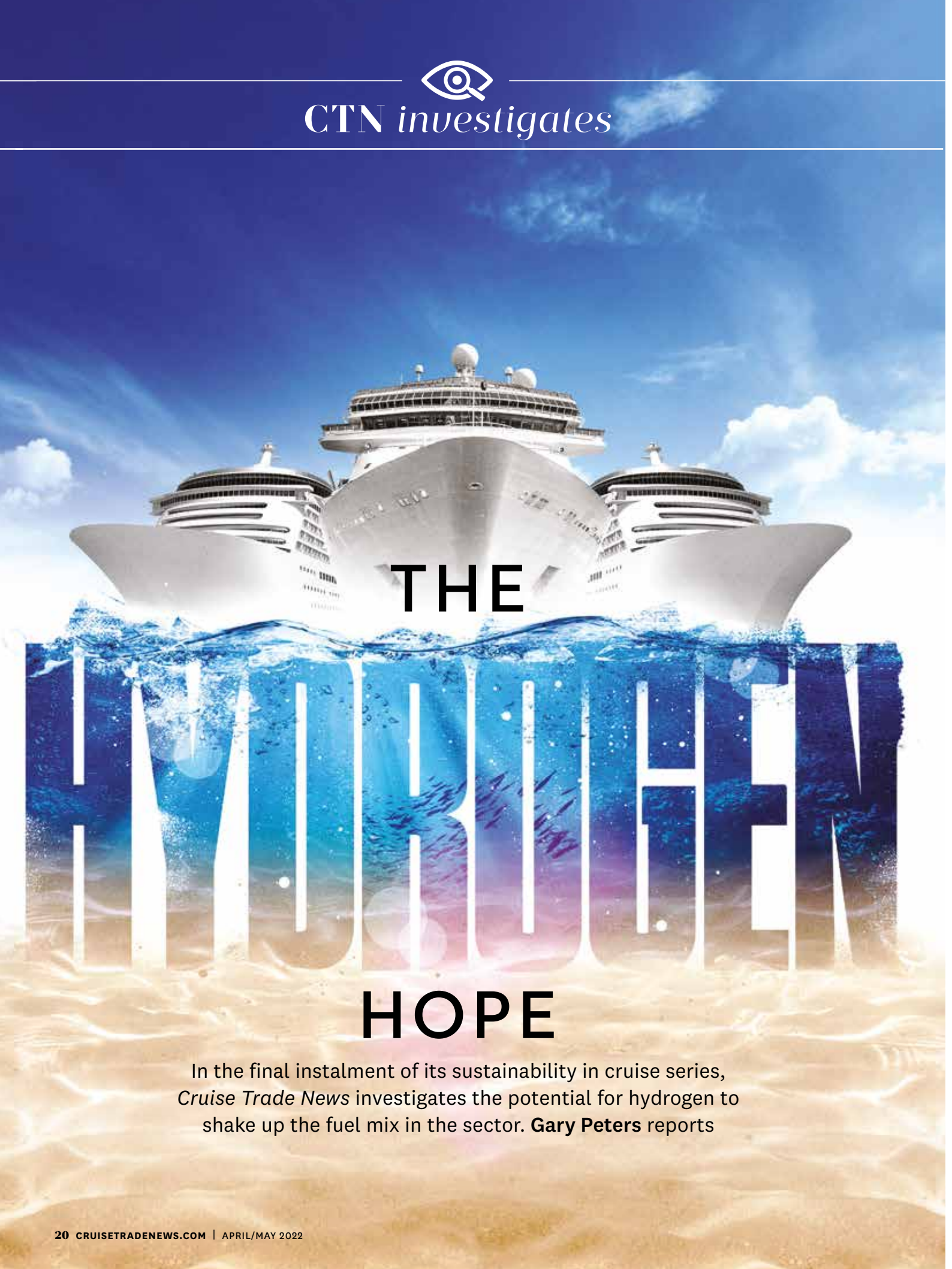
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THE HYDROGEN HOPE

In the final instalment of its sustainability in cruise series, *Cruise Trade News* investigates the potential for hydrogen to shake up the fuel mix in the sector. **Gary Peters** reports



HYDROGEN IN DETAIL

Six per cent of ocean-going vessels running on hydrogen power by 2030

Liquid hydrogen or hydrogen-based fuels are the “most promising clean fuels for full decarbonisation of the maritime sector”

Engines will need be adapted and port infrastructure upgraded to support the use of hydrogen

* (above information available in the Hydrogen Council’s Hydrogen for Net Zero report, November 2021)

Back in July last year, MSC Group revealed its latest project. The idea this time was a partnership with shipbuilder Fincantieri and energy infrastructure company Snam to carry out a study to assess the feasibility of designing and building the world’s first ocean-going hydrogen-powered cruise ship.

At the time, the companies outlined how over the coming 12 months they would look at “key factors related to the development” of such a vessel, including the need to accommodate hydrogen technologies and fuel cells on board.

Among all the sustainability announcements of recent months and years, this was big news: an organisation with the size and power of MSC, aligning itself behind what many view as not just a viable route but also an imperative one if cruise is going to lower emissions to the levels it desires.

With the backing of Fincantieri and Snam, there is genuine hope that, almost a year on, this could be the first step along what is likely to be a bumpy, winding road, but at least the process has been jump-started.

As MSC Cruises senior vice-president of cost optimisation and process improvement Michele Francioni explains to *CTN*: “The decisions we make now for technologies and fuels for future vessels need to be the right ones so it’s important that we engage as widely as possible to

cells operate quietly without moving parts, reducing both noise and the need for maintenance.”

Dreaming big

On a global scale, in November 2021 the Hydrogen Council released a *Hydrogen for Net Zero* report claiming that, alongside electrification, a hydrogen economy was crucial for future emission reductions and meeting global targets. Hydrogen Council executive director Daryl Wilson said in a statement at the time: “Put simply – there is no climate solution without hydrogen.”

It is for these benefits, and as Wolak describes, that lines are keen to get on board the hydrogen bandwagon. One such operator is Northern Explorer, described

by its CEO Rolf A Sandvik as a “cruise company in the making”, which intends to cruise in Norway.

The company, which is working with ABB, has a highly ambitious plan to launch 14 ships, with the first

intended to be operational from 2024/2025. These will use “clean” technologies, including fully electric propulsion, battery energy storage, hydrogen fuel cells and an auxiliary renewable energy supply.

“Hydrogen-powered fuel cells are widely considered to be one of the most promising solutions for reducing harmful pollutants,” says ABB vice-president marine market development Jorulf Nergard. “Hydrogen fuel-cell technology demonstrators for the marine industry and small-scale systems have already been delivered, and progress is being

“Hydrogen fuel cells provide the industry with an opportunity for zero-emission travel”

support technology development. We cannot just sit back and wait for something to happen.”

This view is backed by Frank Wolak, who is president & CEO of the Fuel Cell & Hydrogen Energy Association. He says that for cruise, “hydrogen and fuel cells provide an opportunity to power both propulsion and auxiliary activities simultaneously, while reducing local air and noise pollution, both on board and off-board at the port of call”.

He adds: “Hydrogen fuel cells provide the cruise industry with an opportunity for zero-emission travel. In addition, fuel



Northern Explorer plans to launch 14 ships using "clean" technology

made to make the technology capable of powering large ocean-going vessels."

Another hydrogen fan is Havila Voyages. The operator, which has recently launched its first ship, has not been afraid to shout about its environmental performance and use of battery hybrid power to reduce emissions. It confirmed to *CTN* that its ships (it will eventually operate a fleet of four) have been designed in such a way to enable them to be converted to use hydrogen in the future.

As the line's UK country manager Matthew Valentine says, however, it is not without its challenges: "Electromechanically, panel-wise – our vessels are arranged for a conversion to use other types of fuel. If we change to hydrogen, we must install new tanks, as today's LNG tanks cannot be used for hydrogen.

"The hybrid system is integral to the operation of our ships, and we will therefore still need to use battery power. We can convert because the propulsion of our ships comes from electric motors that are powered from the batteries, [which are] in turn charged from the engines, therefore making it easier to switch over fuel type."

Over at luxury line Silversea, construction started late last year on

The roadblocks to wider use of hydrogen power are based on supply, not technology

Silver Nova, the first ship in its Project Evolution, which will feature a hybrid mix including fuel cells and is due to launch in summer 2023. Speaking in December 2021, the line's chief commercial officer Barbara Muckermann said:

"Sustainability is the future of luxury travel... with *Silver Nova*, we will go even further to meet the expectations of both today's and tomorrow's luxury traveller."

As for MSC, "the project is well underway and we're looking at two main aspects", says Francioni. "[These are] the new technologies for the conversion of hydrogen into electricity on board a vessel and what the supply chain might have to look like... we will have demonstration fuel cells on *MSC World Europa*, which will be delivered to us in October this year, but the aim is to test and scale these up for use with hydrogen in the future."

Turning projects into reality

One thing many of these plans have in common is just that – they are plans –

and bold ones at that – but not physical ships sailing on the high seas at this very moment.

The roadblocks, experts suggest, are centred on supply, not technology. Wolak

explains: "The two primary challenges to making hydrogen power more widely available today are the cost of clean hydrogen production and the availability of hydrogen distribution and fuelling infrastructure.

"Development of large-scale hydrogen production facilities will play a major role in lowering hydrogen fuel prices. For hydrogen produced using renewable electricity, further expansion of wind and solar generation will also drive down costs.

"An approach to overcome the infrastructure and supply network challenges comes through building out hubs, where multiple users of hydrogen can utilise the same fuelling locations and infrastructure to pool demand. One promising location for these hubs is ports, where port operation logistics vehicles and water-going vessels can both build hydrogen demand."

Francioni believes the "right policy decisions" are imperative to "encourage investment in building the infrastructure

for the level of scaling up that is required". "We need to transition from hydrogen that is derived from oil or gas to what is referred to as green hydrogen, which can be provided for with no associated carbon emissions," he continues. "Unfortunately, there is relatively little green hydrogen currently available in the marketplace."

Another hitch according to Francioni is that "most of the current hydrogen related projects are associated with compressed hydrogen, which is a relatively easy solution for small-energy demand industries, such as the automotive sector".

However, he says: "It's not easily applicable to large ocean-going vessels because containerised hydrogen means storage is a constraint. It is better to have liquid hydrogen that can be delivered and stored in on-board tanks."

MSC is exploring converting hydrogen into electricity on board a vessel



The storage of containerised hydrogen is a constraint for large ocean-going vessels



"I'd like to think by 2030 an ocean cruise ship might be powered by alternative fuel"

Dina Lanzi, head of H2 technology development at Snam, highlights how hydrogen is "a solution we are working on". She explains: "What we are doing with our partners is that we are trying to match these ambitions to a place where you can start to bunker hydrogen and then you can start testing the first vessels. [It's the] chicken and egg [scenario], so you need to collaborate and to have a common roadmap to test the fuel and then it can be extended."

Around the corner?

Despite these challenges, as mentioned previously, in just a couple of years Northern Explorer is planning to have its first ship up and running.

Sandvik says: "By 2024-2025, there will be an increasing number of ships using hydrogen for propulsion, and the first Northern Explorer ship is scheduled to be in operation at this time. Unfortunately hydrogen is not a silver bullet solution to the future fuel question. The majority of the cruise sector operates much larger vessels than what we are planning."

That last statement shows wide-scale use of hydrogen in cruise is still some way off, but as ABB's Nergard says: "There are studies and pilots considering hydrogen energy in various forms – compressed hydrogen, liquid hydrogen, hydrogen as ammonia, hydrogen as methanol. It is likely that two or three of these will become the standard form of future green fuel. The availability of the various fuels will depend on choices made by the rest of the shipping industry as well. The fuels with the highest volumes will become more cost efficient."

Francioni also takes a long-term view: "There's a lot of work to do but I'd like to think by 2030 or so there might be an ocean cruise ship powered by alternative fuel such as hydrogen. We need to continue to collaborate, to be ambitious and to be positive to make this happen."

There's plenty of hope for hydrogen. 🌱



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines

YOUR TIME TO SHINE

Entries for the Wave Awards 2022 are officially open,
so don't wait – this is your chance to win

In November, the leading event in the cruise calendar will return ready to celebrate the industry once again. For the Wave Awards 2022 in partnership with Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, there are 27 awards in total, each judged by an independent panel of experts, as well as numerous passenger favourite awards, voted for by the public.

Now is the time to enter. For 2022, there are new categories such as Best Innovation and a Women in Cruise Leadership award. There will also be awards for Best Ocean Cruise Line, Best Luxury Ocean Line, Best New Ship Launch, Best for Solo Travellers, Best for Excursions and many more.

This year's ceremony will be held on 16 November at the Pan Pacific Hotel in central London. We hope you will join us for an evening of entertainment and to celebrate the finest achievements in the cruise industry.

Cruise Trade News editor Gary Peters said: "We are delighted that the entry process

for the Wave Awards is underway. Now is the time to prepare your entries and get cracking on your chance to win at this year's Wave Awards. With a comprehensive range of categories, there is something for everyone.

"Winning a Wave Award demonstrates the hard work, innovation and teamwork throughout the cruise sector, highlighting all those who raise awareness of cruise holidays. We wish you the best of luck."

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines head of sales Geoff Ridgeon said: "The Wave Awards is a real highlight in the travel calendar. It is a night of celebration and is a great way to recognise all those who have gone above and beyond to deliver the very best experiences to guests right across the industry.

"We are really proud to be sponsoring the awards, to show our appreciation to the travel trade and the media for all that we will do together to make 2022 another great year for travel. We can't wait to see you there." 

Visit  [thewaveawards.com](https://www.thewaveawards.com) for information on how to enter and to book your ticket for the ceremony. Closing date for entries is **27 May 2022**.



“
Enter now –
winning a
Wave Award
demonstrates hard
work and innovation
”

Fast Facts

Scheduled to launch in July 2022, *Seabourn Venture* is the first of two new ultra-luxury expedition vessels that will take Seabourn and its guests into new territory. Guests cruising on this all-suite ship will be able to hike, kayak, snorkel and scuba-dive in some of the world's most remote destinations, while enjoying the luxury of a ship with interiors by Adam D Tihany. *Venture*'s 26-strong expedition team will be on hand to help guests discover more about amazing wildlife, and in selected destinations guests will be able to experience life under water in one of the ship's two mini submarines.

264

GUESTS

120

CREW

132

SUITES

10

PASSENGER DECKS

1

POOL

Seabourn Venture



1

Suites

All 132 staterooms on *Seabourn Venture* are veranda suites. Each is elegantly fitted out with bespoke furniture and premium materials – and guests will also find a built-in heated wardrobe, so they can grab a warm coat in the morning and deposit a wet parka when they return from unique adventures.

2

Constellation Lounge

The Constellation Lounge offers amazing 270-degree views and features floor-to-ceiling glass walls. It's the perfect place for guests to appreciate ocean wildlife and stunning shoreside landscapes in warmth and comfort – or simply enjoy a sunset cocktail.



3

Discovery Centre

This is the place on board for daily lectures and briefings from a world-class team of wilderness experts, scientists, historians and naturalists. In addition, because the Discovery Centre is large enough to accommodate all guests on board *Venture*, passengers never have to fight for a seat.



4

Restaurants

One of eight on-board eateries, The Restaurant is the ship's elegant main dining room. Elsewhere, there is The Colonnade for more casual dinners, The Patio for al fresco dining, and The Club for made-to-order sushi, as well as Seabourn Square for coffees and drinks.



5

Pool

Located on deck five aft, *Seabourn Venture*'s heated pool and two hot tubs offer the chance to enjoy the great outdoors and scenery while basking in balmy waters. Whether the backdrop is the Northern Lights or a passing iceberg, this is a dip guests will never forget.



6

Spa/Gym

An amazing space to relax, with incredible views through full-height windows, *Venture*'s spa and gym offers a range of fitness equipment and beauty treatments, as well as a Mindful Living Programme created by wellness expert Dr Andrew Weil. Guests can rejuvenate their mind and body while they travel.

”
In conversation with...

CLIA'S MARIE-CAROLINE LAURENT

As director general of CLIA in Europe, **Marie-Caroline Laurent** has quite a job on her hands. She explains what her background in transport and current affairs can bring to the cruise sector, and why engagement is top of the priority list



Cruise is the epitome of the complexity of transport,” says Marie-Caroline Laurent. “You have a ship and mode of transport, entertainment and hospitality, and you have the destination, local policies and local communities. It’s a complex environment to manage and to grasp.”

A few months into the job, Laurent seems to have hit the ground running, but she is not afraid to face up to the tasks that currently occupy her working days, not least that “complexity”. The director general for CLIA in Europe only joined the association toward the end of 2021 but was soon thrust into the deep end.

“It has been an extremely busy few months,” she continues. “Day two of me joining CLIA, I flew to Madrid for a conference to meet the whole community, going to see the key markets,

which was amazing... it was a very hands-on introduction to the job. Then, of course, Omicron hit, so we were all sent back home.

“The silver lining was that it showed the robustness of our [health and safety] protocols. There were obviously a few cases picked up in the news regarding Omicron. But overall, operations continued, with people cruising safely.”

Engagement is crucial

A likeable and passionate character, Laurent previously worked in leadership roles at the International Air Transport Association for nearly a decade, including a stint as assistant director for EU Affairs. She has also worked in policy development for the Association of European Airlines, and as a parliamentary adviser at the European Parliament and as senior policy officer at the American Chamber of Commerce to the EU.

This level of experience should serve her well in cruise, not least in terms of communicating the needs of the sector to those in the corridors of power. “It’s about talking on a national level; having a more regulatory engagement in the dialogue,” she says.

“Maybe what is missing sometimes is how we communicate. We have much to be proud of, including the advances we have made. My hope is that we open up to other type of sectors, speaking to regulators and the external world about what we’re doing.”

She adds: “My goal is really to help the industry structure its message, talking to the external world, fitting to the regulatory challenges and local political expectations. We have done – and are doing – a million of good things. So, now we focus on how we structure that into a consistent message. Having a structure will help us be more transparent and visible, in terms of what we do and where we want to go.”

But how will that be achieved? “I think it’s about access,” she explains. “With the challenges of decarbonisation [for example], the industry is now cooperating more with regulators and local destinations. We’re still in the middle of that transformation.” It will, as

Laurent agrees, take time to break down any barriers, but this aforementioned transformation is “accelerating”, she believes.

“Covid forced everyone to speak to each other. Suddenly, you had to speak to the local health authorities and the national health minister. Before, there was not necessarily this daily and very intense dialogue. The same thing goes for decarbonisation; cruise lines are in line with international objectives.

“We have concrete targets that will fundamentally change the way we cruise, in the sense of having new ships putting

the focus on reducing emissions. I am surprised, to be honest, how quickly the discussions are coming back. Every day we are talking with destinations on how to best plan for operations in the coming years.”

The decarbonisation plan

This future, as Laurent has already described, will bring success to those who tackle the sustainability challenge head on, and also invest in emission-reducing technologies and climate-friendly policies.

“In terms of priorities for this year, let’s look at the short-term elements,” she says. “Indeed, it’s the decarbonisation framework. Today in Europe, we only have seven per cent of the cruise berths equipped, or to be equipped, within the next three years, with shoreside electricity, which is a tiny portion of what we need.

“How do we make sure the investments are there? The same question applies for liquefied natural gas, which is still a fossil fuel, nobody can deny that, but is one of the main solutions to achieve immediate and short-term reductions. The ultimate



**“Cruise is the epitome
of the complexity
of transport”**



Marie-Caroline Laurent and her CLIA colleagues regularly engage with cruise line members, such as Royal Caribbean

“The end goal is synthetic LNG with alternative fuels to support zero emissions”

end goal is synthetic fuel, synthetic LNG with alternative fuels to support zero emissions. Discussions are happening now in terms

of the legal framework for this.”

There is also the immediate future to ponder, as Laurent clarifies. “We’re not yet out of the Covid crisis. We expect, especially over the next six months, to be focused on what the new health protocols should be, as we see more and more countries coming back to normal. What does it mean for cruising? What will be the conditions for operations this summer in Europe? So we are still very much focused on that, trying to understand what’s the best approach for the safety of passengers, taking into

account the evolution of the virus.”

On a personal level, the sector is of course still new to Laurent. Her background in transport provides a firm grounding, but cruise has its own distinct feel and format. “One of the key differences I’ve seen between aviation and cruise is that cruise is extremely flexible – ships are bound to the sea and discovery – whereas an airline operates to a strict schedule,” Laurent says.

“This freedom has benefits, but also some challenges. Does it impact your engagement with a destination? We need to have this principle of engagement with destinations, so everybody knows what their concerns and interests are, and how we can find practical solutions.”

With Laurent at the helm, it’s a fair bet that those solutions will be found. 📍

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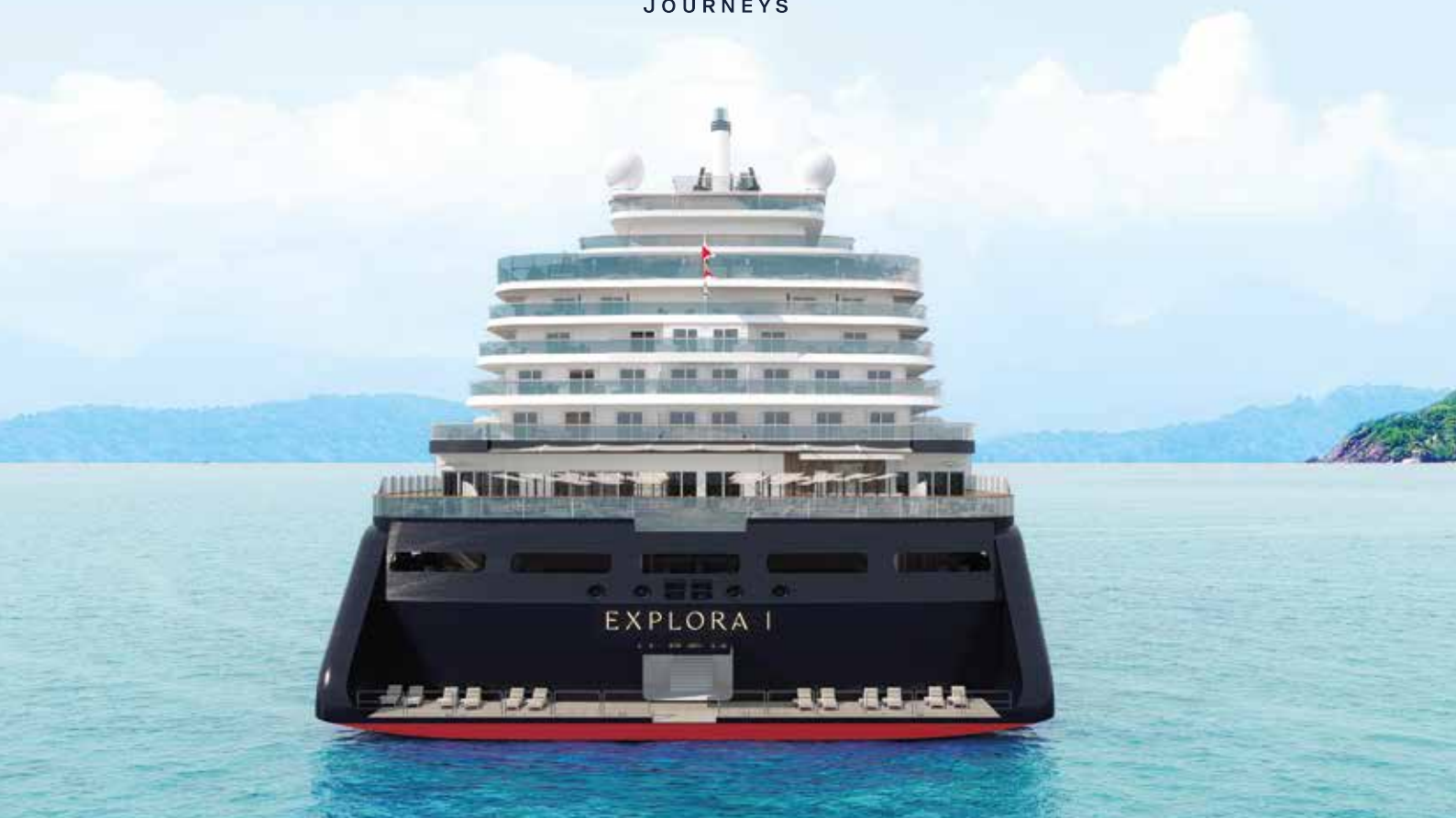
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Win at Selling

UK expeditions

Expedition cruising around the UK is firmly on the agenda, with no-fly itineraries designed to provide the best of adventure cruising closer to home

During the height of travel restrictions, sailings exploring the British Isles became a renewed focused for many cruise lines. These offered the chance to get back on board and reinvigorate the sector. Now, as restrictions are eased, global travel is once again on agenda, but there remains a growing trend for UK-based expedition cruising.

Upon the release of its 2023 Arctic & Global programme, Aurora Expeditions was keen to highlight one itinerary in particular: the 14-day Jewels of Coastal United Kingdom voyage, created to delve deeper into the UK's most historically significant and wildlife-rich destinations.

Promising to take guests to "charming fishing villages, majestic castles, [and] magnificent archaeological sites", the cruise certainly packs a formidable



A cruise offers the perfect view of the White Cliffs of Dover

With so much to explore and experience, travellers are starting to see the potential of an expedition sailing."

A different perspective

The key it seems is the chance to see a "a different perspective of the UK", continues Walter. "From the White Cliffs of Dover to the incredible wildlife of the Isle of Staffa, there are some truly remarkable places.

"Nature lovers will be intrigued by the abundance of seabird colonies while history enthusiasts can immerse themselves in centuries of history by visiting age-old monasteries and the ruins of

ancient settlements."

Dewing also highlights new opportunities, particularly the Pembrokeshire islands. "Daily visitor numbers are heavily restricted, so to be able to visit by small ship and explore is ideal," he says.

As for why the UK remains a hitherto relatively unexplored area for expedition cruising, Dewing believes it comes down to the fact that historically, expedition lines have focused on polar regions. "The opportunity to explore the UK at the right time of year provides a relatively short window during relocating between the Antarctic and the Arctic," he continues. "This means the destination can be missed by planners, but it is so rich in everything an expedition cruise seeks to provide."

Walter adds: "When guests think of an expedition cruise, many think of the Arctic or Antarctica. However, with the travel limitation over the last two years, the British Isles has taken centre stage. We've seen a surge in demand from new and regular guests for an adventure closer to home."📍

expedition punch. As Aurora Expeditions UK MD Jos Dewing explains to *Cruise Trade News*: "Our business from UK travel partners is growing considerably and, based on very positive feedback and insights, the UK was a logical destination for us to experience and clearly

"The British Isles is the perfect destination for an expedition cruise with so much to explore"

demonstrates our commitment to the UK and the growing domestic market."

As Dewing highlights, the line has seen strong growth in the UK market, with a "real passion from our past guests to explore the world that is on their doorstep".

It's not just Aurora, however. Hurtigruten Expeditions is also running UK expeditions, again to meet demand for a different type of voyage. The operator's head of sales Mark Walter says: "The British Isles is the perfect destination for an expedition cruise.

SELLING TIPS

"Focus on clients that are passionate about wildlife, birdwatching, or specialist activities like sea kayaking, snorkelling or even scuba diving," says Dewing

• Walter advises: "Highlight the opportunities to get off the ship to explore the wide-ranging excursions from hikes to rib safaris."

• "Recommend to customers that they book early to avoid disappointment; plus, with year-round sailings, consider travelling outside of peak seasons," Walter adds



Parents and children alike will be enchanted by *Disney Wish's* Grand Hall

Disney Wish includes interactive entertainment for the whole family



NEWCOMERS

The latest ships, what's on board,
and how you can sell them

↑ DISNEY WISH

The 4,000-guest *Disney Wish* has, unsurprisingly, been designed with families in mind, and for clients who love everything Disney, this will be the ultimate cruise getaway.

On board, *Disney Wish* will feature AquaMouse, a water tunnel ride with scenes from Mickey Mouse animation shorts, as well as music and special effects. A Disney cruise is fun for the whole family, not just the children, with live music, comedy acts and family game shows all hosted at Luna, an all-new entertainment venue.

Launching in summer 2022, guests can join *Disney Wish* for its maiden voyage on 9 June 2022 – a five-night voyage visiting Nassau and Disney's Castaway Cay.

What's unique on board?

Agents should emphasise the unique opportunities on board *Disney Wish*, such as the "world's first" *Frozen*-themed dining experience, featuring musical performances from Elsa and Olaf as guests are served Norwegian-inspired cuisine.

TUI Isla offers a wide variety of cabins



→ TUI ISLA

TUI Isla is TUI's latest river cruise ship offering, and its launch at the beginning of April marked an important milestone for the line, with three ships finally sailing. The ship has two restaurants and bars on board. Verdaastro is the main restaurant, while the Bistro is a casual dining option, with both open for a buffet breakfast and seated lunch and dinner.

Travel agents can emphasise that this ship features plenty of nightly entertainment to keep guests pleased. The Observatory includes an outdoor sheltered terrace with a happy hour. Inside, guests can enjoy performances from musicians, international and local guest acts, and quizzes.

Another selling point is that TUI offers a full board plus package as standard, so all three meals and mealtime drinks are included.

What's unique on board?

Weather permitting, TUI promises guests an authentic al fresco dining experience with barbecues and other outdoor events held on the top deck – hopefully while basking in the sun along some of the world's finest rivers.



TUI Isla delights with its outdoor events on the top deck

“Azamara Onward staterooms include 24-hour room service whereas suites have butler service”

↓ AZAMARA ONWARD

Launching in May 2022, *Azamara Onward* will give guests the option to explore new destinations on a small-sized ship, with only 670 passengers on board.

The ship's maiden voyage will feature extended stays and overnights, so guests can wake up and explore new destinations and ports of call in-depth. On board, *Azamara Onward* offers a spa and fitness centre and nightly entertainment including live music, Broadway cabaret and destination-inspired performances.

Guests can also take part in enrichment programmes and classes, where experts will provide an insight into ports of call and answer any questions. Cabins are split into suites and staterooms, with interior, ocean view and balcony options available. Staterooms include 24-hour room service and bath products, whereas suites include butler service and complimentary in-room spirits.

The maiden voyage, an 11-night Christening & Maiden Voyage departing 2 May 2022, will visit Monte Carlo, Florence, Pisa, Sorrento and Kotor, among other destinations.

What's unique on board?

There is something to entertain every type of cruiser, but for guests who enjoy a laugh, *Azamara Onward* hosts comedy nights. There will also be array of entertainment that goes beyond theatre shows to engage entertainment-oriented guests. 🎭

Azamara Onward guests can enjoy comedy nights and live music



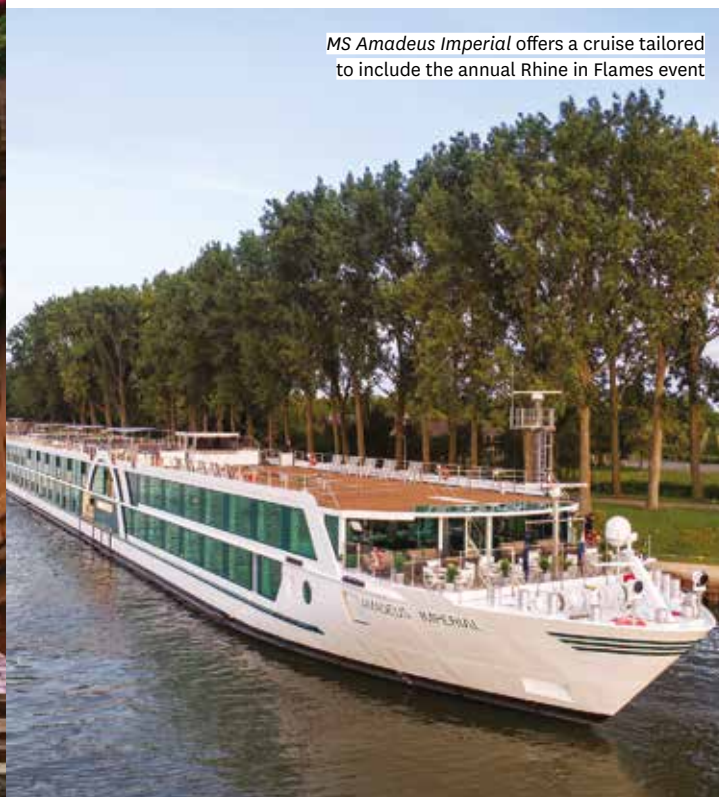
Oberammergau hosts its celebrated Passion Play, which only takes place every 10 years, from May to October 2022



THE VERY FINE RHINE

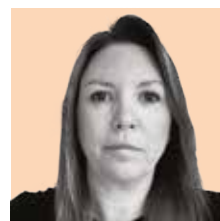
Thanks to new ship launches, novel itineraries and two once-in-a-decade events, 2022 and 2023 are set to be halcyon years for Rhine river cruises, writes **Sarah Holt**

MS Amadeus Imperial offers a cruise tailored to include the annual Rhine in Flames event



“Clients can explore part of the 85km German Wine Route or go on a Kölsch beer-tasting tour”

Expert VIEWS



“Rhine cruises cover culture, cities and Christmas markets with magical castles, churches and medieval towns a staple. Our customers love the quiet squares of Koblenz and the boozy coffee in Rudesheim.”

JAYNE BAILEY
Bond Travel



“Tulip-themed cruises and Rhine cruises that include quaint towns seem to be the most popular. Many [clients] are asking for the new direct Eurostar train from London to Amsterdam too, with a short journey time. It’s a lovely way to travel.”

CLARE DUDLEY
*Managing Director,
Ponders Travel*

The Rhine is already one of the most popular river cruise destinations in Europe, but in 2022/23 its allure is set to get even stronger thanks to a flurry of new ships and itinerary launches, and two very special statement events.

The evergreen appeal of the Rhine begins with its history. Not only does the river score through storied cities like Strasbourg, Cologne, Koblenz and Basel – where many river cruises embark – but it’s also home to the Rhine Gorge.

In this UNESCO world heritage-listed valley, the banks of the Rhine become tower block-tall and the hillsides are topped by more than 40 castles and fortresses. Passengers can visit several of these structures on excursions. AmaWaterways, for example, offers an exclusive visit to the 13th century Lahneck Castle, with its Rapunzel-worthy turrets and gap-toothed ramparts, on its seven-night Enchanting Rhine itinerary from Basel to Amsterdam.

Connectivity

Food is another major highlight of every Rhine river cruise. Passengers can go on a number of belt-buckle busting

excursions, from visiting a traditional tavern in Cologne to try reibekuchen potato pancakes and apple sauce (available on AmaWaterway’s seven-night Captivating Rhine cruise from Amsterdam to Basel) to venturing into the Black Forest from Breisach to see how chefs make the area’s famous cherry cake.

Then there are the drinks that are available to try in the Rhine region. Sell clients a cruise that stops in Speyer in Germany and they can take excursions that explore part of the 85km German Wine Route. Book them onto a cruise that calls in to Cologne and they can go on a Kölsch beer-tasting tour.

Find them an itinerary that features Rudesheim, like TUI River Cruises’ seven-night Rhine Explorer 2 from Basel to Amsterdam, and they can enjoy a Rudesheimer Kaffee – a distinctive coffee that’s served with a shot of brandy and a shower of chocolate flakes on top.

Another obvious draw of the Rhine is its connectivity. The river joins directly to the Moselle, Neckar and Main and it’s linked to the Seine, Elbe and Danube by a network of canals. That means customers with time for a longer cruise can book an itinerary that takes in multiple waterways, like Avalon Waterways’ 15-night Magnificent Rivers of Europe



The magnificent Lahneck Castle is one of more than 40 castles and fortresses to discover along the Rhine Gorge

SELLING TIPS

Get customers to book for summer 2022 by telling them about itineraries that tie into the Floriade Expo and Oberammergau Passion Play – two major events that only take place once a decade

•

Encourage guests to return to the Rhine for a second time by highlighting how different a Christmas markets cruise is to one that coincides with a summer event like the Rhine in Flames

•

Quash the quibbles of nervous flyers by suggesting no-fly Rhine itineraries that allow customers to get to their embarkation port by rail from London St Pancras

•

Hook in foodies by telling them about the gourmet experiences that can be enjoyed on a Rhine cruise, from watching Black Forest cake making demos to sampling Cologne's Kölsch beers

sailing that travels from Budapest to Amsterdam, travelling through Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, along the Rhine, the Main and the Danube.

APT UK managing director Paul Melinis says: "The Rhine is one of the most popular rivers in Europe to cruise, and rightly so. It is an exceedingly picturesque river, and offers guests fantastic opportunities to indulge in culture, history, gastronomy and viniculture along the way. To cruise through this region is to wind through vibrant cities and medieval villages."

Seasonal sales

Summer and winter give agents two additional opportunities to sell a Rhine cruise – these are the Rhine in Flames event and the Christmas markets.

Taking place from May to September every year, the Rhine in Flames is an eye-widening fireworks display that turns the waters of the Rhine discofloor bright and lights up the landmarks along its banks.

The event is held at a different location along the river every time, but itineraries such as CroisiEurope's four-night Rhine in Flames sailing on *MS Gérard Schmitter*, round-trip from Strasbourg, and Amadeus River Cruises' seven-night Rhine in Flames cruise on *MS Amadeus Imperial* from Basel to Amsterdam have



APT's new Travelmarvel Contemporary-class ships take to the Rhine in 2022

been specifically tailored to take in the show.

Amadeus product and sales manager Kirsty Reid explains to *CTN*: "The Rhine in Flames is the annual celebration of the wine harvest season and is the most incredible experience with the romantic Rhine Valley bathed in the glow of thousands of red Bengal lights and magnificent hilltop firework displays featuring colourful fountains, Catherine wheels and crackling comets. It really is an enchanting, once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Gingerbread-scented Christmas markets, meanwhile, start popping up around the Rhine in mid-November and

“2022 is a gift horse of a year for Rhine cruises as rare events the Floriade Expo and Oberammergau Passion Play are scheduled to occur”

Floriade and Oberammergau

2022 is a gift horse of a year as far as Rhine cruises are concerned. That's because two rare events – the Floriade Expo and Oberammergau Passion Play – are scheduled to occur.

Taking place once every 10 years in Almere near Amsterdam, where many Rhine cruises embark, the Floriade Expo is a horticultural exhibition in which garden designers from around the world showcase their creations. The 2022 Expo will run from 14 April to 9 October. AmaWaterways is including a Floriade excursion in the cost of several of its cruises between April and October 2022, including its 10-night Rhine & Moselle Delights itinerary from Basel to Amsterdam.

The Oberammergau Passion Play also takes place once every 10 years. In 2022 it will run from 14 May to 2 October, and a handful of lines include an excursion to watch this once-in-a-decade performance.

New ships and upselling

A bumper crop of new ships will sail on the Rhine in 2022 and 2023, including three of APT's new 182-passenger Travelmarvel Contemporary-class

ships. Named *Vega*, *Polaris* and *Capella*, these vessels feature rooftop bars, panoramic restaurants, putting greens and whirlpools.

Viking River Cruises' new 190-passenger longships *Viking Gymir*, *Viking Egdir*, *Viking Hervor* and *Viking Gersemi* will also sail Rhine itineraries this year and next. Highlights of these ships include sun decks with 360-degree views, on-board organic herb gardens and restaurants, bars and lounges with floor-to-ceiling windows.

The Rhine's arterial location means it lends itself easily to cruise and land combos. Riviera Travel, for example, offers a Rhine cruise with a Glacier Express extension. This experience combines a seven-night river cruise from Cologne to Chur with a journey through the Swiss mountains on one of the world's most famous trains and a two-night hotel stay in the shadow of the Matterhorn.

The river's location also makes it a great cruise destination for customers who fear flying. AmaWaterways offers a range of no-fly cruises on the Rhine, such as the seven-night Enchanting Rhine itinerary from Basel to Amsterdam, that allow passengers to begin their journey on the Eurostar at London's St Pancras station. Emerald Waterways also has a no-fly option on its seven-night Jewels of the Rhine itinerary, which runs from the UK to Amsterdam and on to Basel between May and October in 2022 and 2023. 📍

ITINERARIES

Amadeus River Cruises

- Seven-night Rhine in Flames cruise from Basel to Amsterdam on *MS Amadeus Imperial* is priced from £1,984pp, departing 8 September 2022.

▸ amadeus-rivercruises.com

Scenic

- Eight-day Treasures of the Rhine from Amsterdam to Nuremberg on *Scenic Pearl* is priced from £2,295pp, departing 24 August 2022.

▸ scenic.co.uk

APT

- Eight-day Reflections of the Rhine and Main voyage, departing 9 September 2022 on a Travelmarvel ship, is priced from £1,995pp.

▸ aptouring.co.uk

The Rhine in Flames fireworks light up the river and its landmarks in spectacular fashion

most river cruise lines offer some form of festive itinerary. The top options take in spots like Cologne, where market stalls encircle the Gothic cathedral, Strasbourg, which calls itself the Capital of Christmas, and Cochem, which is accessed via the Moselle.

APT has launched new Christmas market cruises for 2022/23. The line's seven-night Rhine & Moselle Christmas Markets sailings run from Basel to Amsterdam on 16 and 23 December 2022 and 15 and 22 December 2023.



APT Travelmarvel's sun decks offer rooftop bars, putting greens and heated whirlpools



Beyond Blueprint tours will offer insights into architectural landmarks



Insignia will soon feature new solo cabins

Going solo

Oceania Cruises is adding dozens more dedicated staterooms for solo travellers and has unveiled new shore excursions

Luxury cruise line Oceania Cruises is showing its commitment for solo cruisers with the addition of 56 staterooms across its fleet. A total of 14 will be added each on *Regatta*, *Nautica*, *Insignia* and *Sirena*, starting from September 2022, as part of the line's OceaniaNEXT initiative.

The cabins, to be located on deck six, will feature soothing tones with multiple



Oceania's staterooms feature soothing tones and luxurious furnishings

layers of luxurious furnishings, accents and artwork, representing the perfect retreat for any solo traveller. All will include a tranquillity bed, refrigerated mini bar, cosy seating area and plenty of storage space, demonstrating that solo need not mean a reduction in quality.

Oceania Cruises president and CEO Howard Sherman said: "Our guests and travel partners wanted more options for solo travellers and more diverse tour offerings, and we are delighted to deliver."

"These new single-occupancy staterooms are ideal for guests seeking the joy of travelling solo while experiencing all the comfort, cuisine and destination expertise that Oceania Cruises is renowned for."

Beyond the ordinary

Oceania has also created new shore excursions – Go Green and Beyond Blueprints – to provide guests with extra opportunities for discovery and exploration. More than 150 Go Green tours are available, with many focusing

on education on how local communities are working to conserve and sustain their surrounding environment.

Examples of tours include visiting a sustainable vineyard in Almeria, Spain, and learning about hydroponic farming in the rainforests of St Kitts.

Beyond Blueprints tours will also offer insights into architectural landmarks such as The Royal Library and The Blue Planet aquarium in Copenhagen, Denmark.

On the excursions, Sherman added: "Whether guests are visiting a destination for the first time or the 10th, our new Go Green and Beyond Blueprints tours offer fresh perspectives and unique insights to enhance their destination experience." 📌

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Some of the Galápagos' most intriguing coves can be explored on zodiac expeditions

AN ECOLOGICAL WONDERLAND

Straddling the equator in the Pacific Ocean and 600 miles from mainland Ecuador, the Galápagos Islands offer expedition cruising and memorable discoveries. **Deborah Stone** reports

The land that time forgot, the Galápagos Islands is a volcanic cluster in the Pacific Ocean, and while most of the 20 or so islands are uninhabited, they are all home to birds, reptiles and plants unique to the archipelago – making it the perfect place for expedition cruising.

The best way to see these islands is by ship. It's a trip of a lifetime for travellers seeking adventure, dramatic scenery, extraordinary wildlife and year-round sun – although they are more interested in the world-class snorkelling and diving than sunbathing on the beach.

They may be lucky enough to swim with turtles and they're guaranteed to get up close and personal to a massive range of birds and reptiles unique to the islands: from Galápagos penguins and waved albatrosses to Galápagos marine iguanas – the only lizards in the world that can swim – and the famous Galápagos giant tortoises.

Some islands are a volcanic desert of lava piles, craters and cliffs, with new lava fields created by sporadic eruptions, while others have hills and mountains with high rainfall, tropical vegetation and plant species only found on these islands. They're an ecological wonderland.

Key players in the region

Celebrity Cruises and Silversea are the biggest cruise lines operating in the region. Celebrity has been sailing here since creating Celebrity Expeditions in 2001 and Silversea began in 2013 on *Silver Galapagos*. Now both have new 100-passenger expedition ships specifically built for the destination with a host of eco-features.

“It's a trip of a lifetime for those seeking adventure, dramatic scenery and extraordinary wildlife”

Newest is *Silver Origin*, its name in honour of Charles Darwin's *On The Origin Of Species* book, which he partly researched here in 1835, helping to make the islands famous. *Silver Origin* debuted in 2020 but was only christened this year at San Cristobal island, while Celebrity Cruises launched its all-suite mega-yacht *Celebrity Flora* in 2019. Both have state-of-the-art dynamic positioning systems that allow the ships to stay still without anchors in order to protect the area's delicate seabed and coral reefs.

Celebrity Flora also uses some solar power to reduce emissions, while



Expert VIEW

“The good thing for our travel partners is that a Galápagos Islands cruise has a reassuringly expensive price, so the commission is marvellous. It is a very high-value product for our guests. It is not a destination where discounting is appropriate.”

PETER SHANKS

*Silversea UK, Ireland,
Middle East & Africa MD*



Celebrity Flora's positioning system keeps the ship still without anchors to protect the ocean

Silver Origin has a freshwater purification system to reduce plastic bottle use and reef-safe sun block for guests.

Silversea sold *Silver Galapagos* last year and has no plans for a second ship in the region, while Celebrity Cruises still has two smaller ships sailing here: 48-passenger *Celebrity Xpedition*, built in 2001, and *Celebrity Xploration*, a 16-passenger catamaran built in 2007 – both since refurbished.

However, they are not the only players here. Audley Travel and Avalon Waterways both sell *Treasure of Galapagos*, a 16-passenger motor yacht. Audley Travel can tailor-make



Snorkelling allows for up-close views of an array of wildlife



SELLING TIPS

Silversea Academy's free online training (silverseaacademy.com) gives an insight into what the brand offers, its fleet and types of holiday.

There are modules on every destination, including Galápagos, and information on new itineraries into 2023

- Celebrity Cruises has online tools, including video modules to bring the destination to life plus courses from presentation skills to social media marketing

- Audley Travel's Caroline Revnell suggests that larger ships with more amenities are best for families and Edwina Lonsdale of Mundy Cruising says add-on land tours of Ecuador or Peru are good opportunities to earn extra commission

- Cruise.co.uk consultant Lyndy Barker says: "It is important when selling Galápagos cruises that clients are made aware that the trip can be quite adventurous and requires a bit of stamina. The high temperatures and nature of the visit means this is not a trip for people looking to sit by the pool and sip cocktails."

Galápagos National Park is an ecological wonderland

cruises on more than a dozen small ships including *SS Mary Anne*, a 28-passenger square rigger, and *Cormorant*, a 16-passenger catamaran.

Ninety-guest *Santa Cruz II* is another popular ship chartered by several companies, including Hurtigruten, for expedition cruises around the islands. Tauck has four-night cruises on it, with an average of two daily shore excursions from licensed naturalist guides. Prices include domestic flights, gratuities, a Tauck director and three nights in Ecuador.

Walk among giants

Most ships operate different itineraries but cover the same main islands with visits to smaller islands depending on the length of the cruise and size of the ship. For instance, Silversea's seven-day voyages from San Cristobal – a door-to-door package including transfers and international flights, pre-cruise hotel stay and domestic flight, or cheaper port-to-port package – will have two included cruise excursions every day, usually a choice of hiking, snorkelling or zodiac cruise and landing.

So, while a hike over lava flows and black volcanic beaches on Santiago Island is for the physically fit, the alternative snorkelling trip that needs minimal fitness also gives guests the chance to see red Sally Lightfoot crabs – with the possibility of penguins.

On Santa Cruz, where the mountains create a microclimate of constant drizzle even in the dry season, there are trips to a coffee plantation where guests can walk among giant tortoises in their natural habitat. Elsewhere, Isla Santa Fe is good for snorkelling or kayaking with the chance to see land iguanas unique to Santa Fe and a beach covered in sea lions, while on the white sand beaches of Espanola marine iguanas live among hood mockingbirds and the occasional giant tortoise.

All Silversea cruises have slightly different ports of call, which is good for back-to-back bookings, and Celebrity Cruises offers a mix of seven-night round-trips from Baltra. *Celebrity Flora* has outer and inner loop itineraries, while *Xpedition* and *Xploration* have northern and southern loops – all slightly different. The smallest ship, *Xploration*, includes

“Land tours in Quito on mainland Ecuador or in Peru for Machu Picchu and Lima are also popular”

16 passengers in nine cabins,” she says. “The boat has some of the largest cabins for a vessel in the Galápagos, including private balconies in all. Medium vessels typically carry 24 to 48 passengers and offer a good compromise between the intimacy of a smaller vessel and the anonymity of a larger one. Clients have more opportunities to find a quiet spot on deck and have time to themselves.”

Land tours in Quito on mainland Ecuador or in Peru for Machu Picchu and Lima are also popular says cruise.co.uk consultant Lyndy Barker: “I’ve found that guests normally want to do a land tour – possibly encompassing another bucket-list destination like Machu Picchu. This is good for us as a travel agent as it enables us to create unique itineraries that truly add value – and increase earning potential.”

‘Iconic’ voyages

As Silversea’s UK, Ireland, Middle East and Africa managing director, Peter Shanks knows a thing or two about luxury cruises and describes the Galápagos as one of the “three iconic destinations” – with the Antarctic and Arctic making up the trio.

“It is not a destination you want to skimp on. It is all about the experience,”

says Shanks, who warns against the “plethora of DIY or smaller companies” offering small ships for 20 or 30 guests. *Silver Origin* is all-suite with butlers, a spa, gym and choice of dining says Shanks. “We take care of everything and pride ourselves in having the best and most knowledgeable expedition team.”

Celebrity Flora also offers “total immersion” in the Galápagos National Park. Celebrity Cruises president and CEO Lisa Lutoff-Perlo, said: “Our commitment to the Galápagos Islands has never been stronger because we know, having sailed these awe-inspiring islands for so many years, what a life-changing experience it is to come here.”

According to Shanks, once a guest has tried an expedition cruise, they are hooked. “Travel agents already have these guests,” he says, “they just don’t know they are going to [the] Galápagos yet. They are mostly baby boomers but we do also have families. Imagine going with your 10 or 12-year-old children and what an experience that would be.

“It is people who have a taste for luxury but are adventurous travellers and love going to Asia, on expensive tours of North America or on safari in Africa. That sort of guest would love going to Galápagos.”

Silver Origin’s explorer lounge offers a cosy spot to unwind by the firepit

Santiago Island’s James Bay, a sea turtle nesting site with a seasonal lagoon where flamingos sometimes feed, while *Xpedition* and *Flora* include zodiac tours of Daphne Major, a volcanic cone that’s home to blue-footed boobies, sea lions and pelicans.

As for other brands, many people like the intimacy of a small or medium-sized ship, where it’s easier to make friends. This is especially true for solo travellers, says Caroline Revnell, Galápagos specialist at Audley Travel.

“A favourite small ship for Audley is *Petrel*, a motor yacht with a capacity of

ITINERARIES

Silversea

- A seven-day San Cristobal cruise on *Silver Origin* departs 3 September 2022, calling at 13 ports, from £9,300pp, door-to-door, and £6,450 port-to-port.
- ↳ [silversea.com](https://www.silversea.com)

Celebrity Cruises

- The line’s seven-night Galápagos Inner Loop on *Celebrity Flora* voyage departs 13 November 2022. Prices from £6,225pp, cruise only.
- ↳ [celebritycruises.com](https://www.celebritycruises.com)

Tauck

- Tauck’s eight-day Galápagos Wildlife Wonderland packages are available from March to April and June to August, with hotel stays in Quito and Guayaquil and four-night cruises from Baltra, from £4,770pp, including domestic flights.
- ↳ [tauck.co.uk](https://www.tauck.co.uk)



Some islands are a volcanic desert, with sporadic eruptions creating new lava fields

The adventurous excursions on offer include the chance to explore some of Norway's stunning fjords



Clean **CRUISING**

On her first ocean cruise, **Lucy Abbott** discovers the joys of exploring Norway with Havila Voyages

Sitting down to welcome a plethora of three-week old husky puppies playing on my lap is the moment I realise I never want to leave Norway.

In preparation for my cruise, I truly do not know what to expect from Havila Voyages, a cruise line that sails the coastal route between Bergen and Kirkenes, but I am just as impressed with the on-board amenities as I join a four-night section of the 11-night voyage from Bergen, embarking in Trondheim.

Some would say it is the perfect match – a selection of impressive cruise excursions that take advantage of the stunning Norwegian coast and a hybrid, eco-conscious vessel to cruise on.

After all, this is my first ocean voyage and I'm extremely keen to travel in the greenest way possible. Luckily for me, Havila boasts a large battery pack combined with an LNG-powered engine, with the environment at the forefront of what they do.

Sailing since December 2021, *Havila Capella* accommodates 640 passengers and 78 crew members with 179 cabins, and is the line's first ship.

This ship is backed and licensed by the Norwegian government so doubles as a hop-on/hop-off service for locals in remote ports up and down the coast. It's clear from the get-go this ship has plenty of value beyond being a cruise ship.

All about that base

Stepping into my stateroom, the one thing that stands out straight away is space – there's plenty of it.

In fact, at 15sqm, my Seaview Superior cabin is above average when it comes to size. Equipped with everything I need for the next four nights, from a kettle (Brits can all breathe a collective sigh of relief), mini-fridge, large port window, TV and ever-handy USB charging points, *Havila Capella* truly feels like a home away from home.

“A Northern Lights button means guests can opt to be woken up if the aurora appears during the night”

There is even a Northern Lights button to press on the in-room phone so guests can opt to be woken up if the stunning aurora makes an appearance during the night.

One thing that I admire about Havila is how local talent is infused into the on-board décor, with locally made chairs and a wooden zig-zag coat hook in my room, just to name a few things, giving me plenty of Scandi home inspiration.

Haking a look at the other cabin styles, the Junior Suite offers an expansive floor-to-ceiling window, stocked mini-bar, swivel TV and Nespresso machine, whereas the Lighthouse Suite features the welcome addition of a private balcony with a bubbling jacuzzi.



A dog-sledding outing offers exhilarating action and the possibility of a cuddle with a pup

SELLING TIPS

For the eco-conscious guest, emphasise that Havila Voyages thinks about sustainability across every level – from fuel, food, waste, recycling bins and a paper key card

Serving up multiple small dishes means that guests can taste a wide range of local specialities and delicacies, further enhanced by the menu changing as guests travel up the coast

Guests should take advantage of the adventurous excursions offered by Havila to delve into all that Norway has to offer

I'm particularly impressed with the accessible cabin options. Not only do both the main and bathroom door swing open automatically when activated, there is also a walk-in shower and ramp to get onto the balcony.

Enjoying the views

Wandering around the rest of the ship, I find myself drawn to the sound of a crackling fire in the lounge and am delighted to find a puzzle corner where fellow guests are pondering the pieces, sat in well-crafted plush chairs.

In fact, the warm and intimate atmosphere is heavily reminiscent of a river cruise, further bolstered by the ship

The intimate atmosphere is reminiscent of a river cruise as the ship sails close to the coast



The observation lounge provides views of the night sky or the summer midnight sun



The Nordic design reflects the surrounding landscape

Guests wouldn't even realise that they are sailing on a ship with the world's largest battery pack. According to Havila, the ship can sail for up to four hours noise and emission-free.

It's also fascinating to learn that this hybrid ship switches from LNG to battery power at the correct times via computer. The switch between the two is just as seamless as the waters the ship is cruising on, with the only difference being slightly less vibration when switching to the battery.

Arctic explorations

Havila's eco-oriented focus also applies to the excursions on offer. From e-biking to dog sledding, I certainly take advantage of travelling around Norway.

I thoroughly enjoy the dog sledding as I am whisked around by a pack of nine energetic huskies who howl the moment they stop running, eager to carry on – the addition of meeting a litter of three-week old pups is the cherry on top.

Even on excursions that are perhaps not entirely eco-friendly, such as snowmobiling under the polar sky, Havila says it has plans on how to adapt with the potential to switch fuels over to a more sustainable option.

My one key aim is to witness the beauty of the Northern Lights and I can hardly believe my luck as I admire the spectacle night after night – even getting a glimpse of them when snowmobiling in Tromsø.

While my dream life of living out the rest of my days on a husky farm may not come to fruition, I am content in the knowledge that Havila offers a conscious cruising option around the beautiful Norwegian coast and I am eagerly planning my return. 📍



The menu on offer changes as the ship travels up the coast

“Boasting a section of glass ceiling panels, the bar provides stunning views of the sky”

Food stories

With a menu that changes as the ship travels up the coast, Havila Voyages' main restaurant, Havrand, impresses when it comes to bringing a destination to life.

From king crab, deep-fried cod tongue or fish soup from Bergen to a lightly grilled reindeer fillet, it's easy to connect with my surroundings at every meal.

Although my vegetarianism means that I cannot indulge in some of the weird and wonderful local delicacies, my companions are all extremely delighted with their food, and I'm relieved to see a dedicated vegetarian section of the menu.

There is a also fine-dining option on board, Hildring, and for only an extra £25 per person, I enjoy a five-course mouth-watering meal.

Straight-forward sustainability

Sustainability made easy epitomises Havila Voyages' plan and ambition to be a fine-tuned green machine.

Every element of the ship is thought out with the planet firmly in mind and I'm pleased to see that even my key card is made of reinforced paper alongside a reusable lanyard.

always sailing close to the coast. Exploring further, I find arguably the most important place – the bar.

Located at the top of the ship, this seems to be equally popular day and night and possesses a friendly atmosphere as locals and cruise guests swap stories. Boasting a section of glass ceiling panels, the bar provides stunning views of the sky, or even the Northern Lights.

Even the gym – typically the most unpopular place on a ship – is transformed into a hotspot as it features floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall windows. Observing tiny Norwegian towns as I get my daily steps in on the treadmill makes it all worth it.

Despite the gorgeous views on offer, nothing can beat the wraparound veranda located on the top deck on the ship, which is the perfect place to snap some impressive pictures.

DETAILS

● Prices for the Voyage North itinerary on *Havila Capella*, departing 30 March 2023 from Bergen to Kirkenes, start from approximately £1,000pp, based on two sharing an inside cabin.



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The last word

Angus Struthers, vice-president of marketing and UK sales at Cunard, looks ahead to the exciting addition of *Queen Anne* to the fleet

The simple act of handing over a passport. It sounds mundane, but oh how we've missed it and all it symbolises. That desire to travel, to escape the everyday, is arguably stronger than ever.

Cunard's two busiest booking periods on record have happened in the past 12 months, firstly as guests jumped at the chance to experience the first cruises sailing from and around the UK and then planning further ahead to summer 2023.

While the choice of destinations varies, the constant is an increasing demand for suites as guests celebrate a sense of occasion on board – perhaps a sign of people treating themselves to a little more luxury than previously?

What we're also seeing is that it's not just our loyal guests sailing once more, but we're gaining newcomers, both existing cruisers trying Cunard for the first time and also those new to cruise.

Sure, there are uncertainties and many factors we simply cannot control that are influencing our guests' decision making, but it's our job to reassure our guests where we can and be prepared to adapt.

Welcome Queen Anne

For our guests and all involved, especially travel agents, there's a lot going on, and we'll continue to do all we can to keep



"Queen Anne celebrates the beautiful style that Cunard is known for"

everyone up to date and informed. Remember, our Shine Rewards Club is the best way to keep up to date with news and offers.

When we have the opportunity to shine a light on the future, we do exactly that. In May, guests will have the opportunity to book a maiden programme on a new Cunard ship for the first time in 13 years when itineraries on *Queen Anne*, the fourth ship in the fleet, go on sale.

It was such a proud moment to finally announce the name of *Queen Anne* and start showcasing what she'll look like. We've collaborated with some of the finest designers in the world to craft a ship that takes inspiration from Cunard's past, celebrating the beautiful style that the brand is known for; to define a striking new design direction for our future.

Having been immersed in the Cunard archives, the designers, whose portfolios include luxury hotels, bars, restaurants, high end yachts, and private grand residences, have reimagined signature spaces and introduced new venues.

Guests will be able to enjoy a greater choice across the ship, whether they are looking for something to eat, be

entertained, be pampered, exercise or simply relax and unwind in one of the many outdoor venues.

There's lots more we'll be revealing in the coming months, through to when *Queen Anne* welcomes all on board, including plenty of opportunities for travel agents to explore the ship in early 2024. Greeting guests will be captain Inger Klein Thorhauge, who has worked with Cunard since 1997 and as captain of *Queen Victoria* and most recently *Queen Elizabeth*.



The designers took inspiration from Cunard's archives to create a striking new design direction

Before then, there's lots more to enjoy, including the return of our event voyage programme. These special cruises provide opportunities for guests to be immersed in a range of topics, from the world of theatre (May 2022), art and design (August 2022), literature (December 2022 and November 2023), to food and wine (January and September 2023), gardening (February 2023) and dance (August 2023). Many themed voyages will take place on *Queen Mary 2*, as she sails across the Atlantic, featuring industry leading figures and renowned brand partners.

Announcing a new ship, new itineraries, new event voyages – and we're still only in spring. 🎉



Guests will be able to book a maiden programme on *Queen Anne* from May



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