

# cruise

## TRADE NEWS

# A Sense of Occasion

Refined cruising with Cunard

- How to sell all-inclusive deals
- At a Glance: Inside Columbus
- Port transfers: Who does what
- Destination Focus: Indian Ocean

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• A LUXURY  
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# The Viking *difference*

**What turns a good cruise into a great one? John Wilmott finds out on a Viking ocean cruise.** Let's start with the things that are most desirable about travelling by water. An exciting new destination almost daily. An elegant environment. Stylish, spacious accommodation. Delectable multi-course meals. Impeccable service from a highly trained crew. Inspiring entertainment. Take these pleasures and turn the dial of satisfaction up to maximum. That's what Viking Cruises has been working towards for the past 20 years, first with its river cruise ships and now with its recently launched ocean cruise ships. Its formula of stylish comfort, enlightening

exploration and sophisticated fun has been carefully nurtured. Standards have been raised to a superior degree, whether you choose to sail on one of Viking's award-winning ocean ships or state-of-the-art river ships. One of cruising's most powerful attractions is the array of destinations visited in one holiday. Which is why Viking itineraries allow as much time as possible in ports – and a free excursion in almost every one to ensure you can explore without worrying about the cost. As for the ambience, the Scandi-chic design is admirable for its copious comfort and attention to detail. Every stateroom on the ocean ships has a private veranda so you can relax and

**2017, 2018 and 2019 ocean cruises are on sale now.**

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enjoy the views. Viking doesn't believe alternative dining should be chargeable, so *The Chef's Table* and delicious Italian food in *Manfredi's* carry no supplement. As for the service, you would expect pampering on any cruise, but on a Viking voyage you're as likely to make friends among the amiable crew as you are with your fellow guests. And the entertainment? Expect to move seamlessly from a classical trio playing in the lounge to the beat of a live band by the pool. Viking offers another compelling difference, and that's the value. Fancy some wine or beer with your lunch or dinner on board? It's on the house. As is a great deal else – flights from the UK including selected regional airports for European cruises, on board Wi-Fi, tea and coffee anytime and 24-hour room service. There's also free access to the wonderful *LivNordic* spa with its thermal suite, saunas, hydrotherapy

and plunge pool and the first ever snow grotto at sea, so guests can learn how to chill Nordic-style. With another new ocean ship launching this year taking the total fleet to four, and each taking just 930 guests, Viking now sails to many incredible destinations – the sparkling Mediterranean, the historic Baltic, the majesty of Norway, the vibrant Caribbean, the wild landscapes of Alaska, the Americas, the exotic Far East and the ever-changing coasts of Australia and New Zealand. Wherever you choose to cruise, Viking focuses on bringing the destinations on board. From the delicious food and wine being served to the music and artwork on display throughout the ship, every aspect is designed to reflect the regions through which you are travelling.

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## Blue sky thinking...



There are few better places in which to sample a taste of the high life than on the ocean, on board a best-in-class cruise ship.

Luxury cruising is on the up, and now even hotel brands want a piece of the action, with the recent announcement that Ritz-Carlton will be launching a fleet of ultra-luxury yachts in 2018.

Saga Cruises realises that contemporary comfort and style are paramount to its customers, and its game-changing new ship, Spirit of Discovery, is set to break new ground in design innovation – read more on page 24.

And with many shipyards fully booked for the foreseeable future, as Carnival Cruise Line's Iain Baillie says in our interview on page 38, this is the golden age of cruising – great news for agents selling cruise.

Finally, if you're a bright new sales talent, why not enter our Rising Stars awards? More details can be found on pages 28 and 62.

Have a successful month!

*Rebecca*

Rebecca Barnes  
Editor  
@rebeccabjourn



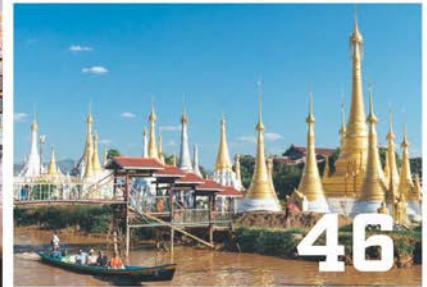
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## OFFERS

# Cosmos offers early booking incentive

Cosmos has kick-started the launch of the 2018 A-ROSA river cruise programme with an early-bird incentive on any bookings made by 31 July.

The operator is extending the radius of its VIP home pick-up service to 100 miles from customers' departure airport, an increase of 50 miles.

Cosmos has also launched the A-ROSA programme two months early to help agents target the early-booking river cruise market.

The 2016 programme features 37 cruise itineraries on a choice of six ships that will be operating on four rivers. There are also 297 departures for customers to choose from.

Prices lead in at £649 per



person for a five-day Mini Cruise Romance on the Rhine itinerary, departing 14 March 2018 and visiting Cologne, Mannheim, Strasbourg and Mains, with the chance to cruise the Middle Rhine.

The price includes a VIP home pick-up service, return flights, full-board cruise accommodation and overseas transfers.

A-ROSA teamed up with Cosmos at the start of this year to form a strategic partnership to provide agents with river cruise packages with flights from a choice of 27 UK airports. All of the A-ROSA programme is bookable via Cosmos's new agent portal [cosmos.co.uk/agents](http://cosmos.co.uk/agents).

## SALES NEWS

# Specialise and cash in on sales success



**Cindy D'Aoust**, president and CEO of CLIA, believes that specialising is the key to successful selling. Speaking at the recent CLIA conference, she highlighted understanding your customer, "If you match the right cruise with the right customer they'll be clients for life," she said. D'Aoust also emphasised the benefits of access to the best education and training and noted that the trend in the UK is a higher conversion rate through travel professionals; research shows that if you specialise by researching cruises that are a great match for your skillset, your earnings will be 280 per cent greater than others.

## AWARDS

# Wendy Atkin-Smith awarded top travel accolade



Managing director of Viking Cruises UK, **Wendy Atkin-Smith**, was awarded the Exceptional Achievement Award at the Silver Travel Advisor Awards, held recently at Madame Tussauds in London.

The award is made to one

individual as a recognition of lifetime support for the mature traveller, and judged by a range of senior travel industry figures, including John McEwan, former president of ABTA, and Ben Briggs, head of marketing at Wendy Wu Tours.

"It has been wonderful to recognise a real luminary of the travel industry – Wendy Atkin-Smith of Viking Cruises," said Debbie Marshall, managing director of Silver Travel Advisor. "She is a worthy winner who has helped nurture a new sector of service-driven, 50s-friendly travel."

**For more on the Silver Travel Advisor Silver Travel Awards, turn to page 26.**

## APPOINTMENTS



Royal Caribbean International has appointed **Michelle Nagy** to the role of regional sales manager for Scotland. Nagy, who will report into Sarah Weetman, head of retail, UK and Ireland, is joining from L'Oreal where she held the position of account manager in Scotland.



Saint Lucia has appointed **Patricia Charlery-Leon** to lead operations in the UK for the tourism board. Her remit is to grow visitor arrivals from the UK and Ireland, as well as strengthen Saint Lucia's trade and consumer relationships.



**Scott Peters**, former cruise director at Tauck, is the cruise line's new small ship cruising specialist. Peters, who has been with the cruise line for 19 years, will be responsible for training and educating Tauck's key travel agents on the company's portfolio of small ship ocean cruises.



**Stuart Leven**, vice-president, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) of Royal Caribbean, has been appointed to the ABTA board of directors, along with the Rt Hon Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE.

### NEW ROUTES



## HAL follows the pack to Cuba

Holland America Line will set sail for Cuba from Fort Lauderdale on 22 December this year, when 1,350-passenger Veendam embarks on a 12-night Cuban Explorer voyage, calling at Cozumel (Mexico), Costa Maya (Mexico), Key West (Florida), Havana (Cuba), Cienfuegos

(Cuba), Montego Bay (Jamaica) and Georgetown (Cayman Islands). Prices start at £989 per person, double occupancy.

There will also be nine seven-day sailings starting on 3 January 2018, all of which will call in at Havana, with prices from £849 per person based on double occupancy.

New Cuba shore excursions are planned, including the Best of Havana all-day trips, with prices from £84 per person, and more off-the-beaten-track tours to the UNESCO biosphere area of Las Terrazas, developed as part of Cuba's Green Revolution in the 1960s. Prices for this tour lead in at £114.

### THEMED CRUISES

## Saga puts Edinburgh Fringe at sea cruise centre stage

Saga is offering cruisers the chance to indulge their cultural side with its five-night Edinburgh Fringe at Sea sailing next summer.

Saga Sapphire moors overnight in Leith, so guests can enjoy the atmosphere of

the world's largest arts festival. There is also an optional tour to celebrate the last night of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and watch the fireworks and light show.

The cruise also includes an overnight call to Newcastle for

the chance to visit Sage Gateshead performing arts venue and the nearby Baltic Flour Mill, which has been converted into a modern art centre. Optional excursions include visits to Alnwick Castle, Hadrian's Wall or Cragside Gardens.

Prices for the five-night cruise, departing on 22 August, lead in at £976. This price is based on two people sharing the lowest available inside cabin grade.



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## REFURBS

### New fixtures, furnishings and fittings for Pacific Princess

Princess Cruises' smallest ship, the 670-guest Pacific Princess, has undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment before embarking on a series of ex-UK sailings this summer. Renovations include new beds, linens, carpeting, curtains, lighting and USB ports in all of the ship's 336 staterooms and a redesign of the atrium to give it a New York City hotel design.

The ship's pool deck has a garden theme, featuring modernised tiling and refinished teak wood, with new double bed loungers and casual seating groups of outdoor living sofas, lounge chairs and pool chaises.

Pacific Princess is operating a number of European cruises this year and will start 2018 with a 111-day world cruise, departing from Los Angeles on 20 January.

European cruises for next year include an eight-night Ireland, Wales and Scotland voyage, with the option to attend the Military Tattoo festival.

Pacific Princess will depart from Dover on 2 August, calling in at St Helier, Milford Haven, Dublin and Edinburgh. Prices start at £1,519 per person. Guests can receive up to \$350 on-board credit per stateroom if they book before 31 July 2017.



## SALES NEWS

### Take a river cruise in order to sell a river cruise

**Rudi Schreiner**, president of Ama Waterways, believes that it's important for agents to go on river cruises in order to sell them. Schreiner, speaking at the 2017 CLIA Conference, also recommended that agents try to focus on special interest groups; 50 per cent of Ama's business is currently groups and small charters, while wine-themed cruises are also gaining popularity. Ama will launch a new wider ship, AmaMagna, in 2019, which is set to be the largest in central Europe. The ship, which will accommodate 194 passengers and 97 staterooms, will feature a quieter, more fuel-efficient engine. "As the luxury river cruise market continues to grow, we want to carry on as the leader in industry innovation," said Schreiner. "We believe, given the unique demand that exists, that now is the perfect moment to introduce this style of ship."



## OCEAN CRUISES

### CMV 'starts new chapter'

Cruise and Maritime Voyages's newest ship Columbus has embarked on a busy programme of ex-UK voyages following its naming ceremony in Tilbury last month. CMV commercial director Chris Coates said the introduction of new flagship Columbus will allow the cruise line to begin a new chapter.

"Columbus will enable us to respond to customer demand for traditional-style cruising on board mid-sized cruise ships. The arrival of Columbus means we are on course to carry 100,000 passengers in 2018 cruising from the UK, which is 10 per cent of the market."

Coates thanked the travel trade for the welcome it has given Columbus. "Thanks to their support, we have sold 95 per cent of our 2017 Columbus cruise programme and 40 per cent of 2018 capacity."

Columbus will be operating a programme of voyages including the Norwegian Fjords, British Isles, Iceland, Baltic Cities, Canary Islands and Madeira, Scottish Highlights and Faroes, Spain, Portugal and France.

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## NEW SHIPS

### Aurora Expeditions adds new purpose-built ship to fleet

Polar adventure cruise line Aurora Expeditions will be taking delivery of its first brand-new, purpose-built expedition vessel in time for its 2019/2020 Antarctic November-to-March season.

The cruise line has teamed up with US-based shipbuilder SunStone Ships to create the ship, which will feature X-BOW technology, which makes journeys through the more challenging seas, such as Antarctica's notorious Drake Passage, a smoother experience for small ships.

The new as-yet-to-be-named vessel will have cabin balconies, a 180-degree indoor observation deck, wellness facilities, including gym, sauna and spa, a custom-designed platform to cater for additional numbers of kayakers and divers, and a mud room for easier preparation for climbers and skiers.

The ship will also have inflatable Zodiac crafts to carry guests between ship and shore with daily landings for guests to get close to the wildlife in the regions they are visiting.

The new ship will bring the number of vessels in Aurora Expeditions' fleet to six.



## GETTING SOCIAL

What you've been talking about this month...

**f** Bless the lovely Jane McDonald for recommending that clients use a travel agent when looking to book a cruise and just had to post her lovely kind comments about my service! **(Linda Young)**

**f** A big thank-you to Cruise & Maritime! A regular client booked a world cruise directly as very limited availability and didn't want to wait in case the cabin had gone. She came into the office very apologetic that she'd booked direct, asking if we would still help with her visas. An email from us and the client and we are handling the £13K booking. Happy client and happy agent. **(Leisa Pitt)**

**t** **@wintertonworld** The news is out, thanks **@cruisetradenews** for being the first to report that the new **@emeraldwaterway** 2018 brochure is out

**t** **@kristinawallen** Congratulations Sam Otter on your new role **@CelebrityUK** Director of Marketing & PR. Great appointment. Exciting times for all **@JoRzyCruise**

**t** **@Ekat\_Dim** The #winner takes it all. Great night at **@thecruisechallenge** and so informative. Well put together **@cruisetradenews**

## NEW ROUTES

### Frontier America features cruises on new paddlewheeler

North America specialist Frontier America has added sailings on the new paddlewheeler from the American Queen Steamboat Company to its 2017 programme.

The 166-passenger, all-suite American Duchess, will set sail from New Orleans on 14 August on a 23-day voyage to Minneapolis. The first purpose-built, boutique, functioning paddlewheeler, the vessel features the largest suites on the river in every category.

American Duchess will sail the Mississippi and its tributaries with overnight stays in port, including the heart of Nashville – a first for the

river cruise operator. There will also be round-trip itineraries from Nashville and New Orleans.

Accommodation on American Duchess includes three Owners' Suites, four duplex-style, two-floor, two-bathroom Loft Suites, Veranda Suites and Interior Suites.

Dining venues include The Grand Dining Room and The Grill Room, which will have open seating and will offer regionally-inspired cuisine.

Frontier America offers a nine-night package, including seven nights on board American Duchess with nights in Memphis and New Orleans, for £3,775pp including flights.



# Ritz-Carlton to launch fleet of ultra-luxury yachts

Luxury hotel group Ritz-Carlton is planning to launch a fleet of luxury yachts. At 190 metres, the first of a potential three vessels – each accommodating up to 298 passengers in 149 balcony suites – will take to the seas before the end of 2019.

Itineraries – on sale from May 2018 – are still being confirmed, but a spokeswoman said they will include the Mediterranean, northern Europe, Canada and New England, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The second vessel is likely to include summer cruises in the American Great Lakes in its itinerary. The third will probably be directed towards the Asia-Pacific region.

"The intimate size of our yachts will give us the ability to access and explore smaller ports that larger cruise ships can't access, such as Portofino, Capri and St Barths," she added.

Ritz-Carlton has been looking at entering the cruise industry for more than 12 years, and claims that 405,000 of its guests said in 2016 that they had taken a cruise.

The spokeswoman said: "There is a huge opportunity within our current customer base and the luxury cruise market. We are also hoping to attract those that are new to cruising, who would not consider a mainstream cruise but would entertain a highly curated yacht-style experience with us."



## IN NUMBERS...

  
An average ship's main laundry consumes around 40,000 litres of water per day washing and processing 1,200 tablecloths, 1,200 bed sheets and 6,700 towels

For a two-week cruise, approximately

  
300 to 350 tonnes

of stores [frozen, fresh, dry, dairy etc] are loaded

The total number of toilet paper rolls consumed during a two-week cruise is

15,600

  
A typical cruise ship has more than 60 safety, environmental and health inspections each year

## IN BRIEF

### DFDS gets the party started

DFDS has introduced a new Party at Sea package for groups of 10 people or more who are heading overseas for a celebration, but want to get the party started a bit early.

The package, which is available on the two-night mini Newcastle to Amsterdam cruises, includes a glass of champagne on arrival, a variety of meal options in a choice of the ship's four restaurants, a personalised cake, a cabin upgrade for the host, and a free transfer to Amsterdam city centre on arrival in Holland.

### Paul Gauguin debuts magazine-inspired brochure

Paul Gauguin Cruises has rolled out its 72-page 2018 Tahiti, French Polynesia and the South Pacific brochure with a look and feel that is inspired by travel magazines, including rich destination content and strong imagery.

New for 2018 is the seven-night Society Islands and Tahiti Iti itinerary, which starts and ends in Papeete, Tahiti. Cruise-only prices lead in at £3,307 per person.

### Chris Packham to lead Steppes Travel tour

Escorted tours specialist Steppes Travel is featuring a 17-day cruise of Australia's Kimberley region, led by wildlife presenter Chris Packham.

This luxury small expedition cruise will cover 1,000 nautical square miles, starting in Wyndham and concluding in Broome. En-route sights include King George Falls, the Hunter and Prince Regent Rivers, Montgomery Reef and Horizontal Waterfalls.

### Silversea hooks up with Peninsula Hotels

Silversea has teamed up with luxury hotel chain Peninsula Hotels to offer cruisers on its 73-day Grand Asia Pacific Voyage a three-night post-cruise stay at The Peninsula Tokyo. The sailing departs from Sydney on 2 February 2019 and visits 39 destinations in 12 countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, China and Japan, where the experience concludes with three nights at the five-star The Peninsula Tokyo, which is situated opposite the Imperial Palace.



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 • Mahé/Victoria, Seychelles (🇸🇪) • Nosy Bé, Madagascar  
 • Maroantsetra, Madagascar • Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius (🇲🇺)

(🇦🇪) = Overnight stay

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# All-inclusive pricing –

With Norwegian recently announcing all-inclusive pricing, will other cruise companies

## Andy Harmer

SVP membership & director, UK & Ireland, CLIA



We often talk about there being 'a cruise for every person, budget and occasion' – and with around 60 cruise line members of CLIA operating over 400 ships, that choice is remarkable. This extends to booking the right package – with some cruise lines offering all-inclusive drinks packages, on-board credit, or any number of different value added options. Norwegian, as with all operators, aims to attract holidaymakers from a land-based trip to the sea (or river!); this change in policy is one example of how cruise lines are being creative in how they appeal to non-cruisers.

## Graham Sadler

MD, Regent Seven Seas Cruises

Regent Seven Seas Cruises have been the market leaders in ultra-luxury, all-inclusive cruising for many years. We are one of the only lines that include complimentary shore excursions, making our proposition one of the most comprehensive available, with

## Bernard Carter

Oceania Cruises, senior vice president & MD, EMEA

With the cruise industry growing at a healthy pace, and with strong customer loyalty to cruise in general we are seeing sustained guest migration from the mainstream cruise sector into the Premium, Upper Premium and even the All-Inclusive brands as couples go through their life journey. Oceania Cruises offers the ideal choice to anyone looking to move to a more personal, intimate experience with smaller ships, fewer guests and open dining, as well as speciality restaurants at no charge. With OLife Choice guests get to make the experience even more personal by choosing one of three complimentary amenities – Shore Excursions, Beverage Package or Shipboard Credit. This is in addition to complimentary soft drinks, speciality teas and coffees and free Internet.



### How to sell all-inclusive by Norwegian's Nick Wilkinson

- All-inclusive presents a major opportunity for agents and the wider cruise industry to change existing perceptions of cruise travel and expand its customer base, introducing new-to-cruise customers to a simplified way of cruising.
- Premium All-Inclusive has eliminated many of the issues which held holidaymakers back from booking their first cruise, such as paying

gratuities on-board and racking up a bar bill. To highlight this shift, it is important that all-inclusive cruises are positioned alongside other land-based all-inclusive resorts – travellers will then start to see cruise as a viable alternative.

- Understanding your customers' holiday buying habits and decision triggers – what is it that makes them choose one holiday over another? – will provide opportunities to align the cruise offering with their wants and

needs. Selecting the right cruise for a customer is vital to keep them booking time and again. This intel will enable a greater chance of selling success.

- All-Inclusive is a new product, so some education may be involved. For example, an added benefit is that guests are able to budget for their holiday. Knowing what they will pay upfront means you will have opportunities to sell elements like airport transfers, shore excursions or pre- or post-cruise stays.

# yes or no?

be tempted to follow suit?



flights, transfers, fine dining, premium drinks, gratuities, WiFi and more. It's not surprising that cruise lines are beginning to see the value in this winning formula, it's a strong message that agents can use to entice customers and also keeps pricing simple.



## Tony Roberts

vice president, Princess Cruises UK and Europe

We are keen to offer choice. Guests are welcome to add items such as drinks packages to their cruise and we have made it easy for agents to do this via [onesourcecruises.com](http://onesourcecruises.com). If guests prefer to pay as they go when onboard, we're more than happy to accommodate them. Customer feedback tells us that guests welcome this approach as they pay for the items that are important to them.

## NAPLES, The Amalfi Coast, Sicily and Calabria

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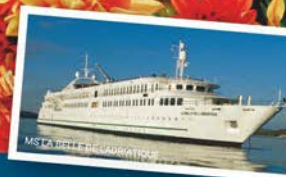
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# Your Business

16 PAGES  
OF INTERVIEWS,  
SALES INCENTIVES  
AND CAREER  
INSPIRATION

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# What's in it for you?

## Support a charity and win prizes with Scenic and Emerald Waterways

INCENTIVE

Scenic and Emerald Waterways are proud to support Reuben's Retreat, a charity dedicated to supporting families and children living with life-limiting or life-threatening illness.

As part of the brands' River Rewards incentive programme, £5 will be donated to the charity for every prize claim made.

River Rewards offers incentives for agents throughout the year; all Scenic and Emerald Waterways bookings made translate into points which can be redeemed against a selection of luxury gifts, including perfume, clothes, handbags, electricals and even cruises. All travel agents can sign up to River Rewards and claim prizes from their first booking.

For more information about the incentive, and to sign up to River Rewards, visit [riverrewards.cruises](http://riverrewards.cruises)

INCENTIVE

## On the rails with Rocky Mountaineer

Canada's 150th anniversary is being celebrated throughout 2017, making this an ideal time to sell Rocky Mountaineer as the only way to experience Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest.

Until 31 July, travel agents who book clients on a 2017 journey directly with Rocky Mountaineer, or through any UK-based tour operator, are eligible to win one of five pairs of tickets on board Rocky's GoldLeaf Service. Tickets can be used in the 2018 season.

Each eligible booking for 2017 gives one chance to win. The more bookings made, the more entries allowed.

Email [khollands@rockymountaineer.com](mailto:khollands@rockymountaineer.com) with the Rocky Mountaineer booking number, customer name and departure date. **Winners will be announced on 1 August.**



INCENTIVE

## This month's star prizes, incentives and fam trip offers

### Princess Cruises hits the jackpot

Feeling lucky? Agents can win £10,000, £5,000 and £1,000 prize jackpots by making a Princess Cruises booking on selected 2018 sailings in balcony staterooms or above.

Princess will be giving away a total of £100,000 tax-free to agents – but agents must make a booking using the link below to be in with a chance of winning: [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/princess100k](http://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/princess100k)

Valid until 31 July 2017, the incentive is applicable on selected 2018 sailings (cruise code must contain an 8 e.g. G807) when booking a balcony grade or above.

Agents can enter multiple times, and each booking will be placed into a ballot to win one of the monetary value prizes mentioned above. For full terms and conditions agents should contact the Princess Cruises sales team.

[princess.com](http://princess.com)



### Plain sailing with European Waterways

European Waterways is offering 10 per cent off as an incentive, and 10 per cent commission payable to agents, for booking early on many of its spring and summer 2018 luxury hotel barge holidays.

The offer, only on bookings made before 15 September 2017, applies to whole-boat charter bookings for several barges cruising in Burgundy, the Canal du Midi, Gascony, and the Upper Loire in France, as well as hotel

barge La Bella Vita in Italy and the Scottish Highlander on the Caledonian Canal and lochs of Scotland.

The offer is also applicable on both cabin and whole-barge charters for most departures on the Panache in Holland during the spring tulip season.

[gobarguing.co.uk](http://gobarguing.co.uk)

INCENTIVE



### Silversea turns up the volume

Silversea is giving UK agents the chance to win a set of Bose noise-cancelling earphones in the Advocates recognition programme.

The 10 winning agents will be chosen from a shortlist provided by Silversea's regional sales managers, with each submitting agents deserving of recognition based on sales performance, marketing promotions or events.

In addition to being in the running for monthly prizes, nominated agents also have the chance to experience the ultra-luxury Silversea product themselves on a VIP fam trip at the end of 2017. The places will go to the 10 most nominated agents throughout the year.

[silversea.com](http://silversea.com)

### Get your rocks off with Carnival

Throughout July, agents can earn 20 points per booking with Carnival Cruise Line's Loyalty Rocks Club incentive. These 20 points have the equivalent value of £20 and can be exchanged for treats. Plus, every booking made and claimed will be entered into a prize draw, with one agent winning a place on a Carnival Horizon fam trip in April 2018.

Carnival's Loyalty Rocks Club rewards agents with a host of treats – from vouchers to holidays, gifts, experiences and more. Agents must claim their reward within the month of booking.



To register for the Loyalty Rocks Club, agents should visit [loyaltyrockclub.redpoints.co.uk](http://loyaltyrockclub.redpoints.co.uk)

INCENTIVE

# Best in class



When it comes to iconic cruising experiences, Cunard leads the charge. Senior vice president **Simon Palethorpe** explains the brand's service standards and discusses the influence of its guests on future itineraries



## On the Cunard experience...

Cunard is synonymous with elegance, luxury and its renowned White Star Service. Our commitment to ensuring each guest is made to feel special begins at the White Star Academy, where each crew member is trained to provide impeccable service. Every detail of our guests' voyage has been carefully considered to make sure they have the most relaxing, memorable experience. It's the aim of our service to make sure that each one of our guests feels special while on board. Our fascinating Insights programme, workshops and special events

on board are designed to leave our guests feeling inspired. And yet it's the luxurious sense of space on board each Queen and the feeling that you are escaping to an uncrowded, refined world that allows people to relax and enjoy a truly unforgettable experience with us.

## On fine dining...

Guests can expect to enjoy the finest culinary experiences at sea with Cunard – amazing food, expertly served, in inspiring venues. The Britannia Restaurant in particular epitomises the grandeur and

glamour of ocean travel for which Cunard is renowned. For top-level fine dining, our premium French restaurant, Verandah, is not to be missed. Guests can enjoy the finest food and wines in the award-winning Queens or Princess Grill restaurants, a dining experience that rivals the best restaurants in the world, featuring both daily specialities as well as a la carte favourites. Of course, no Cunard voyage would be complete without enjoying the quintessentially British experience of afternoon tea, served daily in the Queens Room. While the fun of dressing up for a

gala evening is distinctly Cunard, we also offer a buffet offering in our Lido and Kings Court restaurants. For those looking for something different, we have Mexican, pan-Asian, Indian, Italian and American cuisine, all available for a small surcharge.

## On investment and expansion...

Over the last year we have invested over £120 million in the fleet. The remastering of Queen Mary 2 last year was a huge success. We have continued to invest in the fleet with Queen Victoria's £34 million recent refurbishment in Palermo, Italy. Next year, our attention will turn to Queen Elizabeth as she enters refit in November 2018.

## On Queen Victoria's refurbishment...

On 4 June, Queen Victoria returned to service, having undergone an extensive refurbishment in the Fincantieri Shipyard in Palermo, Italy. We introduced 43 new

Britannia Club Staterooms, bringing her in line with the rest of the fleet. These staterooms allow our guests to enjoy prime mid-ship locations on decks 7 and 8. The stylish new Britannia Club Restaurant allows guests the freedom to choose when they dine. Every stateroom on board Queen Victoria was refreshed with newly designed carpets, soft furnishings, a new flat screen TV and tea and coffee facilities. Our grand suites and Aft Deck 8 penthouse suites have also been completely redesigned to offer enhanced comfort. They are very much the jewel in our crown.

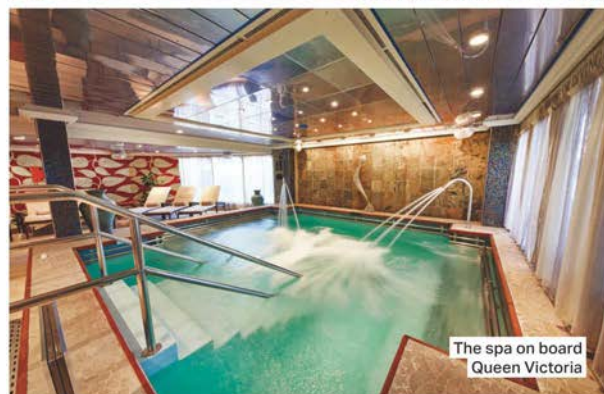
## On customer trends...

One of the fascinating trends we're seeing at the moment is people booking back-to-back voyages on our three Queens – for example, a Baltic voyage on one Queen, followed by the Norwegian Fjords on another, and then perhaps a transatlantic voyage on QM2 to New York to round off the

experience. I just wish I could take the time to experience it for myself.

## On new itineraries...

We are constantly listening to our guests around the world to understand where they would like to see us sail. This has had a strong influence on our 2019 itineraries. From January to May 2019, Cunard's flagship Queen Mary 2 and her sisters, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, will call at 49 different countries and 109 destinations. Of these, 21 are maiden calls and new destinations include Boracay (Philippines), Akita (Japan) and Goa (India). In 2019, Queen Victoria will operate the only full circumnavigation (called 'The world voyage by Cunard'), Queen Mary 2 will be sailing to the far reaches of Asia and Queen Elizabeth will be headed to Australia (sailing out of Sydney and Melbourne for several weeks), before sailing up to Japan for a couple of weeks and then on to Alaska. ⚓



# Suites and staterooms reach majestic new standards

On 4 June, **Queen Victoria** returned from her refit in Palermo, looking more elegant than ever. **Cunard** have made improvements right across this much-loved ship, improvements that they hope will be exciting news for every one of your customers



Above: Queens Grill  
Grand Suite, Q1  
(lounge)

**L**et's start with her accommodation. Cunard have updated the soft furnishings in each suite and stateroom and replaced all carpets, taking inspiration from their heritage with bold colour palettes. They have also added upgraded high-definition wall-mounted televisions in all accommodation, as well as tea and coffee-making facilities – with illy coffee machines in Grill suites.

## Grand Suites, Q1

Cunard have given these unique suites a distinctive fresh look, with their very own colour scheme and luxurious hand-tufted carpets. The clever layout and furniture configuration has enhanced the incredible feeling of space, with plenty of thoughtful details. For example, the beds now look out to sea and the TV in the bedroom lowers from the ceiling so as not to interrupt the view.



Above: Queens Grill  
Grand Suite, Q1  
(layout)

Cunard have also incorporated extra storage space, as well as increased flexibility. Two luxurious full bathrooms, for instance, can be reconfigured with a door to create a separate guest bathroom. The dining area has a new layout too, to include a snug and a butler service area that's perfect for preparing drinks at cocktail parties in the suite.

#### Aft Penthouse Suites, Q4

Your customers may choose to stay in the luxurious comfort of the refurbished Q5 and Q6 Grill suites aft on Deck 8 that Cunard are upgrading to Q4 Penthouse Suites. Features include the first floor-to-ceiling windows to grace the ship's accommodation, designed to allow in plenty of natural light. Bathtubs also offer views out to sea. Other flourishes include upgraded soft furnishings with bold statement cushions on the beds, recessed TVs and wardrobes with a dressing area. ●



Left: Queens Grill Aft Penthouse Suite, Q4 (wardrobe)



Left: Queens Grill Aft Penthouse, Q4 (bathroom)



Above: Queens Grill Grand Suite, Q1 (bedroom)



Left: Queens Grill Aft Penthouse, Q4 (bedroom)

IMAGES ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

# Welcoming new spaces invite customers to unwind in style

The bars and lounges are the sociable hearts of **Cunard** ships, places to mingle with old friends and to meet new ones. Cunard placed special importance on these areas during **Queen Victoria's** refit. Here is an overview of how Cunard enhanced these much-loved venues and even created new favourites, including the **Britannia Club restaurant** with elegant balcony staterooms to match

## Britannia Club

Cunard have introduced the popular Britannia Club dining concept aboard *Queen Victoria*, regrading 43 Britannia staterooms. To complement these new staterooms, which feature premium balconies and a nine-pillow concierge menu, a brand new Britannia Club restaurant next to the main Britannia restaurant on Deck 2 offers a choice of dining between 6:30 and 9:00pm. The venue, in the previous location of the Chart Room, has been totally redesigned and includes plenty of those sought-after tables for two. In case you're wondering, see opposite for details of the new Chart Room.



Above: Britannia Club balcony stateroom



Left: Britannia Club restaurant



Left: Chart Room

### Chart Room

One of the most-loved venues on board has moved to Café Carinthia's previous location on Deck 2. It has a warm new identity, combining modern elements with all the hallmarks of a timeless cocktail bar, such as rich wood tones and Art Deco detailing.

During the day, it is an elegant spot to sip tea and illy coffee and enjoy light breakfast and lunch dishes. During the evening, when the lighting creates a cosier ambience, your customers may be more tempted by classic bar drinks and stellar cocktails inspired by the celestial charts from which ships used to navigate – as well as snacks, nibbles and indulgent Godiva chocolates.



CHART ROOM

### Gin & Fizz at the Midships Lounge

On Deck 3, the Gin & Fizz menu has become a sparkling destination for wines by the glass, especially Prosecco, Cava and Champagne. Alongside the bubbly, premium gins take centre stage here, including those served from a replica spirit tap. This can be ordered exquisitely garnished with one of many tonics on offer, or as part of an impressive Martini range.

### Winter Garden

Within this comfortable and relaxing Deck 9 venue, Cunard has enhanced the feeling of blending inside and outside. The floor-to-ceiling windows create a wonderful, light setting, providing sweeping views out to sea or over the port. A statement floor, the glorious glass canopy and elegant lounge furniture add an impressive dash of refinement. This is the place to savour an informal atmosphere from the morning until late into the evening.

### Yacht Club

Formerly Hemispheres, the Yacht Club has become a destination to entice you right throughout the day. With new furniture and a statement carpet, it hosts Insights speakers, Q&A sessions, sports screenings and live music. During the evenings, there is a variety of entertainment, from jazz ensembles to a DJ and party band for dancing into the small hours.



### Aft sun deck

Cunard has extended Queen Victoria's aft sun deck on Deck 9 to provide more outdoor seating and loungers, including an extended shaded area.

It is now possible to dine al fresco in the sunshine with food available throughout the day, and the Lido Bar will stay open even after the sun goes down. ●

Below: Winter Garden



STATEROOM IMAGE IS FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

# Pushing the boundaries

We sit down with Saga Cruise's chief executive [Robin Shaw](#) to talk service, stylish new ships and why agents are so important to the future of the business



**W**ith a recent 20th anniversary and construction of a game-changing new ship well under way, it's probably safe to say that there's been a fair amount of celebrating in the Saga Cruises camp of late.

Indeed, things have come a long way since original flagship vessel MS Saga Rose sailed on her inaugural cruise to the Mediterranean in May 1997. "We're very proud of what we have achieved," confirms Robin Shaw, during our chat at the recent agents' incentive event held on Saga Sapphire.

Having said that, he also admits the journey has not been without its challenges, which include dealing with older tonnage and a lack of resilience.

Seeing an opportunity to develop its luxury small ship offering, it was clear that investment was the way forward for Saga. "Two years ago we started researching new builds, and signed a contract which is set to take us into a new era," Shaw continues.

"What's important to us is future-proofing Saga. We're continuing with the bespoke approach which our loyal demographic appreciate."

At the heart of the company's DNA is service – many customers will happily testify that, when on board either of Saga's two ships, nothing is too much trouble for the staff.

Serving 25,000 travellers a year and with high repeat rates, the company is still small enough to care about the finer details.



"We aspire to be the best British cruise line with a high level of service, low turnover of staff, continuity for clients and a real family atmosphere."

Saga's stylish new ship, Spirit of Discovery, launches in summer 2019 and will be on sale from September 2017. With capacity for 999 passengers, balconies with every cabin and 109 single cabins, it will combine small-ship luxury with a meticulous design focus.

Created by London-based designers SMC Design at German shipyard Meyer Werft, the 'British contemporary' interior includes cues taken from boutique hotels and restaurants in London such as Hakkasan and The Wolseley.

"We didn't want the design to be mediocre – we wanted elements of 'wow'," explains Shaw. "Our customer panel was consulted every step of the way, and we had a robust process to ensure that we

delivered what they want."

Shaw is also quick to emphasise that they will never 'nickel and dime' customers, despite for example, the chefs being given carte blanche to do what they like with their budgets. "We are sticking to our policy of never charging for speciality restaurants – it will not happen."

Not content with a major launch on the horizon, there is also an option for a second ship on the cards, which will be decided by the end of the year.

Traditionally focused on direct marketing and sales bookings, Saga switched to selling through agents nearly three years ago, and Shaw openly concedes that the trade is the future.

"Bookings have grown 250% year on year, which is why we now fully embrace and engage with agents. No doubt this is the right thing to do; we're just wondering why we didn't do it sooner." ⚓

**"We now fully embrace and engage with agents. No doubt this is the right thing to do; we're just wondering why we didn't do it sooner"**



## SELL IT

You can advance register your customers on a waiting list for Spirit of Discovery until the cruises go on general sale in September – for each registration you make, you will receive a £10 shopping voucher. Then, when the customer converts to a full booking, you'll receive a further £100 voucher per booking. To claim your vouchers, simply email all advance registration details to [incentives@saga.co.uk](mailto:incentives@saga.co.uk). Applicable to new advance registrations made until 25 September 2017.

WORDS: REBECCA BARNES



Classical music provides the soundtrack to the event



A right royal appearance



Debbie Marshall leads the proceedings

## SILVER TRAVEL ADVISOR SILVER TRAVEL AWARDS 2017

Guests mingled with the stars at this year's Silver Travel Advisor Silver Travel Awards, held at Madame Tussauds in London and compered by MD of Silver Travel Advisor Debbie Marshall and Classic FM presenter Aled Jones. Celebrating the best travel companies, experiences and destinations for the over-50s market, the awards recognised 17 winners, based on a record 55,000 votes, including Celebrity Cruises for Best Ocean Cruise Line, Riviera Travel for Best River Cruise Line, and Hurtigruten for Best Specialist Cruise Line. In addition, Viking's MD Wendy Atkin-Smith was awarded The Exceptional Achievement Award, while The Classic FM 25 Year Anniversary Travel Company Award went to Kirker Holidays.



Headline sponsor Saga's Robin Shaw takes to the stage



Guests mingle with the stars at the drinks reception





Presenter Aled Jones entertains the crowd



'Angelina Jolie' enjoys the evening



The winners congregate outside Number 10



# Are you a rising star?

This year's Rising Star Awards are bigger and better than ever, with some amazing prizes up for grabs. Don't miss out on the opportunity to boost your sales career – **enter now!**

With an elite panel of judges and high-profile sponsors including AmaWaterways, Oceania Cruises, Saga and Uniworld, our Rising Star Awards have been created to celebrate the abundance of sales talent coming through the industry – that's you!

There are eight categories up for grabs, including Cruise Agent sales, Cruise Agent marketing, Cruise Line management, and our brand new category, Late to Cruise, which is for entrants aged 35 and over with five years or less experience.

Every nominee will need to demonstrate that they meet the key attributes – Dynamism, Initiative, Creativity and Effectiveness – in order to impress our judges.

"We are delighted to support and sponsor the Rising Stars awards," says sales, marketing and digital director for AmaWaterways, Jamie Loizou. "Many of our team have worked their way up through the cruise industry, a sector of travel they have been involved with from the start of their careers. We therefore recognise the importance of nurturing young talent as they are the future of cruise."

"Through training, increasing product knowledge and mentoring we feel AmaWaterways is able to contribute to ensuring we have the very best people working within our wonderful Industry."

All category winners will receive a complimentary invite to the awards ceremony in London, a trophy and an editorial feature in Cruise Trade News, which is invaluable exposure for your business.

Not only that, AmaWaterways is offering the following prize packages for the lucky winners of the Marketing Rising Star, Sales Rising Star and Management Rising Star categories:

### Marketing Rising Star

- FAM place for 2 – 7 nights in Europe (cruise only)
- £1,500 in co-operative marketing
- Mentoring throughout the subsequent 12 months, including store visits
- A place at the WAVE Awards 2018
- Prize worth over £5,000

### Sales Rising Star

- FAM place for 2 – 7 nights in Europe (cruise only)
- £15,000 in co-operative marketing
- Mentoring throughout the subsequent 12 months, including store visits
- A place at the WAVE Awards 2018
- Prize worth over £5,000

### Management Rising Star

- FAM place for 2 – 7 nights in Europe (cruise only)
- £1,500 in co-operative marketing
- Mentoring throughout the subsequent 12 months, including store visits
- A place at the WAVE Awards 2018
- Prize worth over £5,000

If you think you've got what it takes, enter now at [risingstars.cruisetradenews.com](http://risingstars.cruisetradenews.com)

# Port in a storm

As commercial manager at ABP Port of Southampton, **Rebekah Keeler** is responsible for the Port's cruise business and key partners. She was recognised as one of our Rising Stars for her attention to detail and ability to go beyond the norm



**L**eaving university in 2011 with an international politics degree, Rebekah Keeler's first thought was: "What on earth will I do with that?" With no clear career path, she eventually found an opportunity that seemed to be interesting and diverse - the ABP graduate management scheme.

Starting her career in Southampton, she worked at several ABP ports across the UK and returned to Southampton to work as a port operations and security manager in 2012.

The role gave her an excellent grounding in cruise operations, as well as an insight into a world of opportunity; one highlight was operationally leading the project to redevelop the Mayflower Cruise Terminal.

"I learned all about improving flows and how you can best work with the lines to ensure the flow requirements are met within the design," explained Rebekah from her third floor office overlooking Ocean Terminal at the port of Southampton. "We work in a constrained footprint, so it is all about innovating and finding ways to overcome challenges."

"Working with our team in Southampton to develop solutions that meet the needs and demands of the cruise lines is what I love about my job."

Rebekah is clear she could not excel without the support of her colleagues. Ask her for examples of how the team

members have worked together to create a positive outcome, and several spring to mind.

"As account manager, I get to see from the start when an opportunity is uncovered - from the often challenging development ideas through to the end when we deliver services and solutions."

"A great example is when Harmony of the Seas came to Southampton in May 2016," she continued. "We looked at ways of ensuring we could deliver the highest possible service to her and her thousands of guests, which was no small task."

"By working with Royal Caribbean and drawing on expertise across the port community, we were able to ensure

**"Everyone in or servicing the cruise industry should cruise - only by experiencing it can you truly understand it"**

her visit was a success, resulting in Southampton receiving excellent ratings.

"Being part of the team that made that happen makes me feel proud and excited for the future."

This year, the port will welcome 500 cruise visits and 1.9 million passengers. Rebekah has also been an integral part of the team that secured both Seatrade's Port of the Year 2016 and Cruise Critic's

best UK departure port accolades for the eighth consecutive year.

The pace is fast but Rebekah clearly thrives in this atmosphere. As commercial manager she is the link between the customer and the service delivery team.

"I am the voice of the line within the organisation. I ensure we sign up to what we can deliver - and then we deliver," she explained.

Rebekah has recently returned from the CLIA Summit at Sea, where she sailed from Hamburg to Southampton on board Cunard's Queen Elizabeth.

"Everyone in or servicing the cruise industry should cruise - only by experiencing it can you truly understand it," she said.

Rebekah feels there has never been a more exciting time to be in the industry.

"There are huge opportunities, and we now have to plan the next five, 10 and 20 years ahead, looking at how we accommodate the evolving demand to the highest possible service level."

"I was at a presentation recently where a cruise line executive expressed the extent of cruise ship growth - it's a real eye-opener," she said.

"But it's not just about the infrastructure. It's about every single service provider - from the taxis and flights to the waste, fuel and stevedoring providers. My role is one small part of a very big and well-oiled machine." ⚓

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# The route to stress-free transfers

PORT TRANSFERS HAVE BECOME BIG BUSINESS AS CRUISING BECOMES MORE POPULAR. WE LOOK AT THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR CLIENTS



**T**he cruise is booked and your guests are looking forward to a memorable trip – now's the time to ask how they plan on getting to the port and to suggest they consider a stress-free transfer.

It's something Edwina Lonsdale, managing director of cruise agency Mundy Cruising, always recommends to clients.

"It is easy to imagine that, because we work in travel, everything we do for the client is about having fun," she said. "In fact, the majority of people find the whole process of travelling very stressful, and an agent's role is to relieve that stress. Making

the whole trip easier with pre-arranged transfers will be a huge bonus to an anxious traveller."

There is an option to suit most budgets and numbers of travellers – ranging from cost-effective pick-up-point options, such as a local coach or bus station, to a personal door-to-door service. Here, we take a look at the various options available.

## Car services

Titan offers a door-to-door VIP travel service for most of the cruises in its programme (except those featuring in the Essential Collection), using a fleet of

well-appointed, fully licensed private hire vehicles designed solely to get travellers to and from their UK departure point.

"At Titan, we have always considered the transfers to and from the airport or port to be amongst the most important aspects of a holiday," said Titan agency sales manager Edwina Coppock. "Done right, they can preserve that delightful sense of anticipation at the start and relaxation at the end."

Saga Cruises also offers a return door-to-door chauffeur service. There is no limit on luggage allowance and bags are loaded onto the ship from the vehicle. ➤



"The majority of people find the whole process of travelling very stressful, and an agent's role is to relieve that stress. Making the trip easier with pre-arranged transfers will be a huge bonus to an anxious traveller"

"Saga's door-to-door chauffeur service comes included within the price of all of our ocean cruises," said Saga Cruises PR manager Naomi Thornton. "Not only does it offer fantastic value, but it removes all the stress of travelling to the port and means passengers start their VIP treatment from the second they close their front door."

Ports Direct, meanwhile, offers a range of shared and private door-to-door transfer options to and from the main UK cruise ports, including transfers to and from any hotel pre- and post-cruise.

Shared services are available to and from Southampton, Dover, Harwich, Tilbury, Liverpool, Newcastle and Greenock departure ports. Private door-to-door service is available to and from all UK cruise ports.

"Our shared door-to-door option is popular as passengers get our luxury cruise transfer service, which works out at about half the price of a taxi," said Ports Direct managing director Karl Lapage.

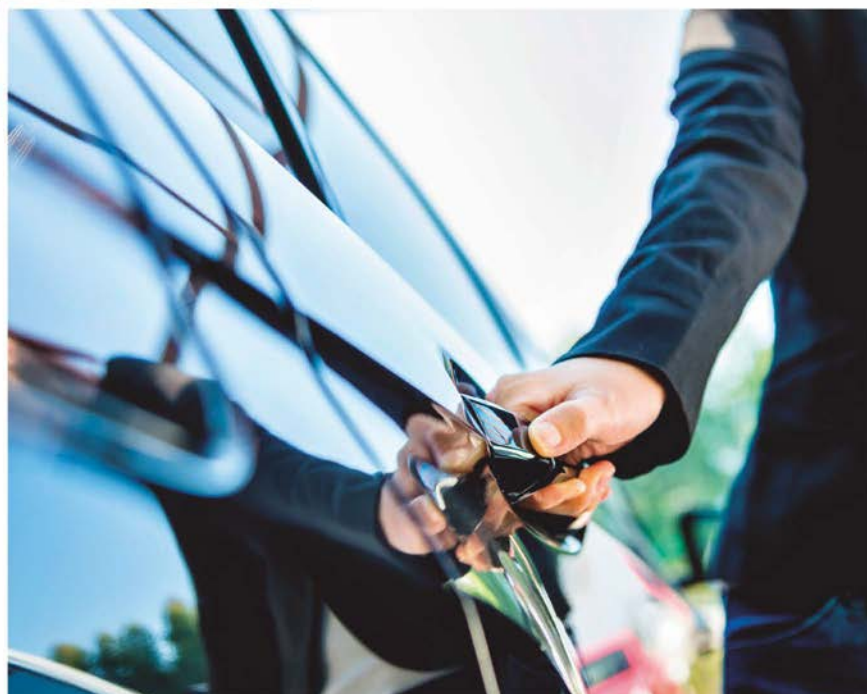
"They have to share with other passengers and there may be a small diversion, but they like it because they get to meet people before they get to the ship and they continue the friendship throughout the holiday."

## Park and ride

For customers driving to join their ship at Southampton or Portsmouth, Airlynx Cruise Parking operates parking at private and secure off-port car parks at both ports.

The company recently reported its busiest weekend on 3 and 4 June 2017, when staff transferred 540 cruise passengers to and from their cruise terminals.

After dropping the car off, Airlynx staff will transfer passengers to the cruise terminals and, upon return, will collect



passengers from the terminal and take them to their vehicle.

Clients can also book their vehicle in for a valet clean while they are away, so they arrive back fully refreshed from their holiday and drive away in a sparklingly clean car.

Airlynx also operates a disability bus that comfortably accommodates wheelchair users.

## Coach transfers

Another company, Intercoaches Shoreside and Port Services, is the official supplier for cruise transfers for Carnival UK and Thomson. For this reason, its vehicles get preferential embarkation/debarkation access. Once a guest's bags are loaded onto the coach, the next time they see them will be in their stateroom on the ship.

Intercoaches offers over 40 pick-up points in the UK and has vehicles with disabled access available for all pick-up and drop-off points.

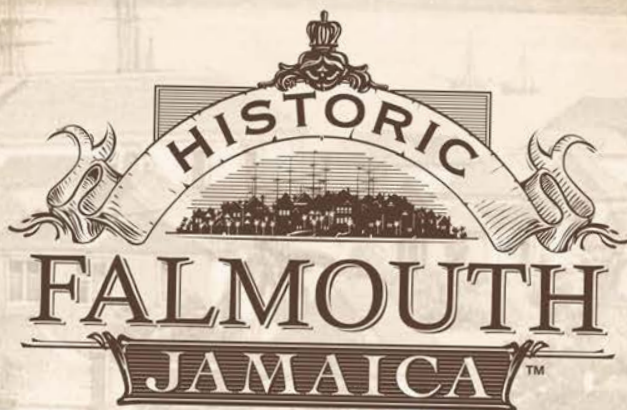
Intercoaches director of Northern Europe, Simon O'Sullivan, said: "I would always recommend travelling with the cruise lines' official partners.

"There is a guaranteed level of service quality, strict health and safety standards, and the driver is in direct contact with the port team should there be any unforeseen traffic issues.

"Add the fact that there is preferential port access and your luggage is taken aboard directly, and that means you have a service that gives you peace of mind. That is what I would want for my holiday."

Finally, Shearings operates a Cruise Connect service, from over 300 joining points to transfer passengers to their holiday coach.

New for 2018, Home Connect is now available to customers as a joining option on river cruise holidays, with over 1,800 postcode districts on offer, where customers will be picked up from their front door. ⚓



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# COLUMBUS

The new flagship of the Cruise & Maritime Voyages fleet, Columbus will sail year-round from London Tilbury on an exciting programme of scenic cruises



#### DINING

At the Waterfront Restaurant guests can opt for a full English breakfast, a leisurely lunch and a five-course dinner. Alternatively, they can opt to dine at the Fusion or Grill speciality restaurants, or sample a sumptuous dinner at the Chef's Table (supplements apply). For something more casual, the Plantation Bistro presents buffet-style meals – and when the weather is fine the Alfresco Grill beckons.



#### ON DECK

Columbus offers expansive deck areas with traditional wooden decking, ideal for viewing on CMV's scenic cruises. When the weather is fine there are two heated swimming pools, two whirlpools and a large screen for outdoor movies and sporting events. Passengers can relax at the Oasis or Ocean Terrace with a cocktail from the Club Oasis Bar, or enjoy a bite to eat from the Alfresco Grill.



#### LOUNGES AND BARS

There's a choice of seven different lounges and bars, including Raffles, the Taverner's Pub, Connexions, Captain's Club & Casino and the Columbus Observation Lounge. There are six entertainment venues, including the three-decked central Atrium, Dome Observatory & Nightclub and the two-decked, tiered Palladium Show Lounge, where the retractable stage provides a large floor for ballroom dancing.

#### FAST FACTS

**247**

metres long

**8.2**

metres high

**11**

decks

**1,400**

guests

**775**

cabins



#### ACCOMMODATION

Columbus has 775 stylishly comfortable passenger cabins, including 64 deluxe balcony cabins and junior suites, which will please many of CMV's customers who have been asking for more balcony accommodation. And, recognising the needs of single travellers, 150 of her cabins will be allocated for solos.



#### LEISURE FACILITIES

Trumps & Aces is a dedicated bridge and card room complemented by a separate Ship's Library, while the Crafter's Studio meets the growing demand for arts and crafts. Guests can work out in the gym, and indulge in a relaxing massage or beauty treatment in the well-appointed Jade Wellness Centre. For a spot of retail therapy, the Central Atrium offers a good selection of shops.

# Save the date...

This month, **John Honeywell**, AKA Captain Greybeard, summarises the exciting forthcoming events hosted by CLIA, and enjoys a taste of luxury on Viking Sea

**C**LIA's recent cruise conference in Southampton was billed as the largest-ever gathering of UK travel agents under one roof – with more than 650 attending the ship visits and conference sessions.

Now it seems CLIA itself is turning into a travel agent, with an ambitious programme of international events in the coming months.

First up will be Cruise360, a collection of masterclasses, ship tours, excursions and a gala dinner taking place in September.

The organisers are undeterred by the embarrassing failure to launch a similar event last year. Scheduled for Marseille, it was cancelled due to lack of response – partly blamed on agents who were reluctant to travel to France in the wake of terrorist attacks – not much of an example to set for their clients!

The 2017 event will be in Copenhagen from 9-11 September, and includes sessions on board Majestic Princess and Norwegian Getaway. There's an optional

**"CLIA's most ambitious move is to come. The 2018 River Cruise event is to be in Ho Chi Minh City. Two days of conference sessions will be followed by a sailing on the Mekong"**

tour of Regent Seven Seas Explorer – billed as the world's most luxurious cruise ship – for delegates arriving early on 8 September. Guest speakers include Seabourn's expedition team leader, Robin West, and *Cruise Trade News* contributor Jane Archer. Sessions include How to Sell a World Cruise, Selling Cruise Holidays To Asia, and River Cruising.

The first day's proceedings will conclude with an evening event at the Tivoli Gardens, seen by many as the inspiration for Disneyland.

The second night will conclude with a grand gala dinner at Copenhagen City Hall, which will be familiar to fans of Scandi-Noir TV series *The Killing* and *The Bridge*.

Incessantly enthusiastic SVP membership & director of CLIA UK & Ireland, Andy Harmer, says: "We're excited to have agents join us to not

only learn more about Copenhagen as a destination, but to experience excursions offered to customers first-hand.

"We're also busy planning the additional masterclass sessions which will enable agents to learn new skills and information to grow their cruise sales."

Barely pausing for breath, the roadshow will move on in November to the annual River Cruise Convention in Amsterdam, where about 200 agents will be able to visit seven vessels – if they can drag themselves away from the city's other attractions.

Amadeus, Scenic, A-Rosa, Tauck, Uniworld, AMA Waterways and CroisiEurope will all be showcasing their vessels at the event, on 22-23 November.

But CLIA's most ambitious move is yet to come. The 2018 River Cruise event is to be in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). Two days of conference sessions from 10 April will be followed by a sailing on the Mekong.

It remains to be seen how many agencies will be able to spare members of staff for all these events – and how the delegates will be selected from the multi-outlet conglomerates.

But it does go to show that working in travel does have its perks. I can't see many similar opportunities in retail – unless unlimited supplies of toilet rolls, dog food or sandwiches past their sell-by date count for supermarket check-out staff. ⚓

## 5 things I did this month

1

Found myself having breakfast with the England cricket team – they were staying at the same hotel as the CLIA conference in Southampton prior to their one-day international against South Africa.

2

Spent two short days in the lap of luxury, in the lavish owner's suite – complete with sauna – on Viking Sea. Essential research for a forthcoming feature in *World of Cruising*.

3

Discovered a delicious new drink – pink Champagne served over ice and with a slice of ginger – on board the stunning new ship MSC Meraviglia, being christened in Le Havre.

4

Watched as Angela Rippon re-named Cruise & Maritime Voyages' latest ship Columbus without smashing a Champagne bottle. She just pulled aside a curtain to reveal a brass plaque.

5

Got away from all things cruise for two days to attend my beautiful niece's wedding at Hipping Hall Hotel, between the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District.



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\*The Masterpiece Collection is available for bookings on select 2018 itineraries made between 13 June 2017 and 30 September 2017. Flights will be booked at the discretion of Uniworld and are based on availability at the time of booking. Supplements may apply from select airports. The private car home-to-airport transfer service is available from one address per booking, in mainland UK within a 150 mile radius of departure airport. For any journeys greater than 150 miles, supplements will apply. Offer is capacity controlled and may be modified or withdrawn at any time. Other restrictions may apply. For complete details please visit uniworld.com.



# Q&A

## IAIN BAILLIE

vice president, UK & international sales,  
Carnival Cruise Line



### HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE AND WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO IT?

One year, although I've spent the last 16 years working in the cruise industry. I've always enjoyed working with the travel trade in the UK and on an international level, so this role really appealed to me.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE CRUISE INDUSTRY?

Cruise is one of the fastest-growing sectors, which I find incredibly exciting. Although we have barely scratched the surface, there is already such a variety of product available and huge potential with forward growth. This is the golden age of cruising and there's never been a better time to work within the industry.

### WHAT MAKES CARNIVAL STAND APART FROM OTHER CRUISE LINES?

Our guests love us because we're fun and informal with a 'come as you are' style offering. Over five million guests cruise with us each year, making us the world's most popular cruise line, so we're obviously doing something right!

### WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Growing our share of the business in both the UK and international markets through a continuation of close travel agent partnerships. I'm also excited about increasing brand awareness through our new ship, Carnival Horizon, which launches in April 2018 and is on sale now.



### HOW HAS THE CRUISE MARKET CHANGED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?

We've seen a broadening of the age demographic thanks to new, modern ships with exciting facilities and more choice, which has helped increase repeat business and attract new-to-cruise rookies. In addition, smarter technology is helping to heighten the guest experience.

### WHAT IS THE TARGET MARKET OF YOUR COMPANY?

Carnival thinks about targeting in psychographic terms. Our guests share

Carnival's values of participatory fun, authenticity and accessibility.

### WHAT PERCENTAGE OF GROWTH ARE YOU TARGETING FROM UK & IRELAND CUSTOMERS EACH YEAR?

We continue to grow our business from the UK & Ireland markets year on year, and this is down to stronger relationships with travel agents, their desire to learn more about the brand and then relaying that knowledge to their clients.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING CRUISE SALES?

Getting consumers to try a cruise for the first time – it's also incredibly important that they book a cruise that's right for them and this is where agents play a role.

### HOW DOES CARNIVAL WORK WITH THE TRAVEL TRADE?

This year we launched Travel Agents Rock, which is our promise to agents on how we will support their business when they work with us. We provide interactive training, rewards for booking through our Loyalty Rocks Club and fam trips. We also pay great commissions, offer extensive gross and net rate pricing and have a very user-friendly booking portal.

### WHY SHOULD AGENTS SELL CRUISE RATHER THAN A LAND HOLIDAY?

Do both if needs be! Our cruises can easily be packaged with a land product. Focus on the incredible value, and the huge choice of activities onboard and ashore.

## TOP THREE TIPS FOR AGENTS SELLING CRUISE

**1** Let digital assist the sale: use video content to showcase life onboard and to give customers a taste of the destinations they'll visit.

**2** Don't shy away from combining land with cruise: most cruise lines have varied durations that can be combined with a land product.

**3** Talking up the onboard experience will help, but pairing this with an understanding of the excursions on land will really add value.

# Your World

20 PAGES  
OF MARKETABLE  
ITINERARIES, SHIP  
REVIEWS &  
DESTINATION  
INSPIRATION

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# 6 of the best... themed river cruises

CRUISES ON WHICH CLIENTS CAN ENJOY AN EVER-CHANGING PANORAMA OF DESTINATIONS AND INDULGE IN A HOBBY OR INTEREST WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE



## Get up and go

Hit the road with an Amsterdam running tour, cycle beside the river, take a hike into the woods... These are just some of the activities available on **Avalon's** new Active Discovery on the Rhine itineraries, starting in summer 2018. Passengers can even participate in Roman games in the historic city of Xanten. After all that exercise, they can indulge in a mouthwatering visit to Cologne's Chocolate Museum and a culinary walking tour in Duisburg. The Wiesbaden to Amsterdam cruise aboard Avalon Felicity features a range of active or more sedate shore excursions.

**Book it:** [avaloncruises.co.uk](http://avaloncruises.co.uk); 0800 668 1801



## Create a masterpiece

Families and groups of friends can create lasting memories with a six-night art cruise on the Canal du Midi aboard the 10-passenger hotel barge **Athos**. The cruise is available to groups that charter the barge exclusively and is suitable for accomplished artists who want to brush up on their skills or complete beginners. The stunning scenery of southern France provides plenty of inspiration and the on-board expert points out the best spots to create a masterpiece, including the four bridges of Beziers and the panoramic view over the Collegiale cathedral in Capetang.

**Book it:** [gobarging.com](http://gobarging.com); 01753 598555



## Festive fun

Get into the Christmas spirit on a scenic four-night mini-cruise along the Danube from Engelhartszell to Vienna and back on **A-Rosa Donna**. The November itinerary includes a night and full-day stop in Vienna to enjoy the famous Christmas markets, plus the chance to stock up on more traditional gifts at the Christkindlmarkt in Linz. Festive cheer is guaranteed as, in addition to meals, the fare includes an open bar on board, along with flights, transfers and a VIP home pick-up service from home to airport, within a 50-mile radius.

**Book it:** [cosmostoursandcruises.co.uk](http://cosmostoursandcruises.co.uk); 0800 440 2797



## Pedal power

Rural landscapes, picturesque villages and grand chateaux are all to be discovered on **CroisiEurope's** escorted Cruise & Bike itinerary. The cruise starts and finishes in Nantes, which is home to Les Machines de L'île, a shipyard regeneration project inspired by science fiction author Jules Verne, and featuring a giant wooden elephant. The cycle route follows the curves of the Loire and includes the seaside resort of La Baule, Guerande salt marshes and Brière Regional Natural Park – just the thing to work up an appetite for all the fantastic French food served on board.

**Book it:** [croisieurope.co.uk](http://croisieurope.co.uk); 020 8328 1281



## Tee time

Keen golfers can tee off in style on the new series of golf cruises being launched by **Amadeus** in 2018. The Basel-to-Amsterdam sailings feature four rounds of golf at clubs such as Le Kempferhof, one of the best in France. Fares include pre-reserved tee times, green fees, electric golf carts, transfers to and from the courses and the services of PGA golf pro Frank Adamowicz. Non-golfing partners don't need to worry as they can head off on walking tours, and at the end of the cruise the captain will host a cocktail party and awards ceremony.

**Book it:** [amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk](http://amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk); 0800 035 6411



## Lots of bottle

Portugal's Douro River is lined with vineyards and Porto, the country's second city, is home to famous-name port houses. **AmaWaterways'** wine itineraries include visits to producers such as Graham's, port tastings, a guided tour around the Mateus Palace – as seen on the labels of the Portuguese rosé wine – and on-board tutored wine tastings hosted by experts. Cruises include time to explore the UNESCO World Heritage city of Porto and the chance to take a trip on a traditional rabelo, one of the wooden vessels that once carried port along the river.

**Book it:** [amawaterways.co.uk](http://amawaterways.co.uk); 0800 520 2250

WORDS: JEANNINE WILLIAMSON

# Smitten by Britain

A cruise that visits destinations around the UK is the perfect taster for those clients unsure whether life at sea will suit them. Besides that, it's ideal for those who don't wish to fly



**U**K cruising is booming, with 1.21 million cruise visitors making calls into British ports last year, a 19% growth rate. It's not that surprising, especially when you consider that cruising is the simplest, most cost-effective way to see this country's major sights in one holiday. From bustling cities, remote islands, royal palaces and scenic countryside to World Heritage sites, fascinating wildlife, National Parks and wild moorland, the UK delivers a wealth of attractions and experiences. "Our growth as a destination is testament to our world-class attractions and the tireless work of all involved in the British cruise industry," confirmed Angie Redhead, chair, CruiseBritain.

## Stress-free cruising

UK voyages are bestsellers for Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines. "We get closer to most destinations, many of which larger cruise ships cannot reach," said Justin Stanton, sales and marketing director. The Scottish Winter Warmer December cruise on Black Watch visits Scotland's blockbuster capital, offers the chance to hunt for the legendary Loch Ness Monster, includes a traditional Highland dancing display and gives guests the chance to enjoy locally crafted whisky. Another trip, ideal for film buffs, is Balmoral's eight-night 'set jetting' cruise, departing Newcastle on 6 August 2017. Tours include Glen Nevis, where scenes from *Braveheart* and *Highlander* were filmed, Glencoe, James Bond's

Working out on board a Fred. Olsen ship



Most ex-UK cruise lines offer British Isles cruises, including Cruise & Maritime Voyages, Cunard, Saga and Fred. Olsen.  
Most itineraries last between seven and 14 days

The city of Edinburgh and the Castle



## BOOK IT

### SAGA

offers a four-night Round the Island Regatta cruise on Sapphire, departing Dover, 20 June 2018. Anchoring off the Isle of Wight for guests to see the Yacht Race, the itinerary also includes St Peter Port and Portsmouth. From £718pp. [saga.co.uk/trade](http://saga.co.uk/trade) 0800 074 8021

### FRED OLSEN

offers a seven-night 'Scottish Highlands and Islands' Black Watch cruise from Rosyth (Edinburgh) on 10 September 2017. Calls include Invergordon, Lerwick, Tobermory and Kirkwall. From £1,249pp for an ocean view cabin. [fredolsencruises.com/travelagentcentre](http://fredolsencruises.com/travelagentcentre) 01473 746164

### HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS

offers a 10-night British Isles cruise departing Portland 17 August 2018. Calls include Dartmouth, Fowey, Isles of Scilly, Beaumaris, Douglas, Oban. From £6,500pp. [hebridean.co.uk](http://hebridean.co.uk) 01756 704 704

### NORWEGIAN

offers a 12-day British Isles cruise on Jade from Southampton on 4 May 2018. Calls include Guernsey, Dublin, Greenock, Kirkwall, Inverness and Newcastle. From £1,819pp for the new Premium All Inclusive offering, adding value of up to £1,200 per stateroom. [agents-uk.ncl.eu](http://agents-uk.ncl.eu) 0333 2412319

**"ABTA research shows 71 per cent of Brits took a staycation last year and, with many new ships travelling around UK ports, this is a great option for first-time cruisers"**

Andy Harmer, SVP membership & director, CLIA UK & Ireland

family home in *Skyfall*, and the Glenfinnan Viaduct, famed for Harry Potter's Hogwarts Express, while in Belfast guests can visit the popular *Game of Thrones* locations.

Fred Olsen has amended its policy so that British Isles cruises are available to anyone with photographic identification, including EU national ID card, council-issued bus pass / travel card, firearms license and ValiDate UK card.

The company continues to meet its own policy of verifying guests' identity and complying with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. However, it reminds clients that valid passports must be produced for cruises calling at ports in the Irish Republic.

### The ultimate 'staycation'

Seabourn has an annual Dover-to-Dover cruise, which Lynn Narraway, MD Seabourn UK, said sells well. "Our 16-day Jewels of the National Trust itinerary includes visits to Cawdor Castle; a zodiac exploration of Copinsay RSPB Nature Reserve; UNESCO tour of the Ring of Brodgar; front row seats at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo; taking a foodie tour of Dublin; or walking the Giant's Causeway. With no airfares involved, it's the ultimate staycation!"

Talking of staycations, Ian Crawford from CruiseDeals.co.uk remarked: "This is making waves within the cruise sector too, as many holidaymakers look for the easiest, cheapest and most comfortable way to explore Britain's sights." He continued: "We've ➤

## SELL IT

1

Suggest pre- and post-cruise stays so that clients can take time to experience more of the region.

2

Point out that UK cruises offer the ultimate in convenience, and no limits on hand luggage or liquids.

3

Emphasise the attractions of closer-to-home cruising. Besides seeing several places in one holiday, it means no driving hassles, traipsing around with luggage or booking hotels.

4

Those unsure about cruising can enjoy a sampler with a two- or three-night cruise closer to home.

5

A round-Britain cruise is a convenient way to see major sights, providing an opportunity to explore hitherto unexplored areas.

seen a significant rise in the number of Brits opting for close-to-home cruises, with Ireland and the Scottish Highlands proving particularly popular. Even those who have always lived in Britain choose cruising to discover something new."

### Touch of luxury

A luxurious haven of gracious living, Hebridean Princess, chartered by HM The Queen and renowned for voyages in and around the Scottish islands, celebrates her 30th cruising season in 2018. MD Ken Charleson commented: "Next summer Hebridean Princess will venture to the south of England, calling at Dublin and the Isles of Scilly. There will be new walking itineraries and a cycling cruise accompanied by Olympic cyclist Chris Boardman."

### Seafarers ahoy

When Saga Pearl II departs Portsmouth next April for a maritime-themed sailing, passengers will be

tapping their feet to traditional sea shanties. Guests can also bowl round the Guernsey countryside in a 1954 vintage coach and take to the waves on a Brixham trawler during a Dartmouth visit. The seafaring theme even extends to special menus on board. Other lines operating British Isles cruises include Crystal, offering one in both 2017 and 2018. Mick Dupont, Crystal's head of UK sales, commented: "Although our guests are well travelled, a round-Britain cruise is still on their wish list as it gives them an opportunity to visit some of this country's most iconic places."

Cruise & Maritime Voyages' British Isles cruises are consistently popular, with 95 per cent sold for 2017 and over 35 per cent sold for 2018. Eighty per cent of bookings have come through the travel trade. Lisa Jacobs, head of trade sales, said: "We offer full trade support plus a comprehensive ship visit programme, product launches and fam trips." Next year, CMV offers 11 UK departure points, ideal for travel trade looking for local departures. ⚓



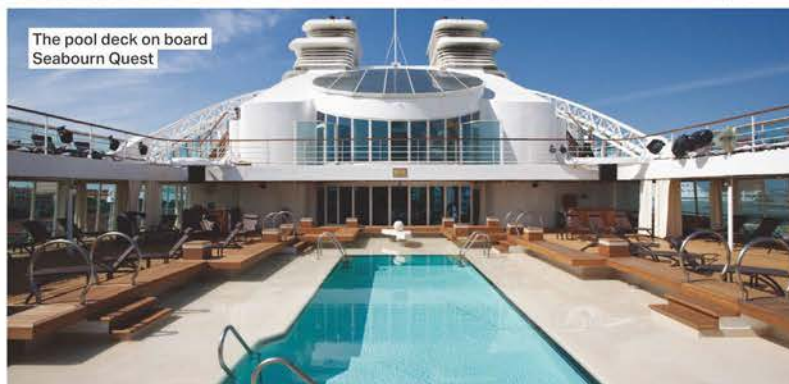
The Tiree Lounge on board Hebridean Princess



Fred. Olsen Balmoral Superior Outside Twin Cabin



Hebridean Princess in Scotland



The pool deck on board Seabourn Quest

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# Inspirational Irrawaddy

For clients seeking an exotic new adventure, a river cruise takes clients into the heart of magical Myanmar

**L**ess than a decade ago Burma, now called Myanmar, was a destination for a small number of intrepid travellers. But political stability and a growing tourism infrastructure have opened up this beguiling country to visitors.

The Irrawaddy, the country's longest river, takes passengers on a waterborne journey on the 'road to Mandalay', starting from the former Burmese capital, Yangon. An ideal recommendation for active clients seeking something different, the small colonial-style river vessels stop at timeless villages where curious youngsters follow tour groups in Pied Piper-fashion. The river is lined with hundreds of glittering golden temples and pagodas. The highest concentration, on the plains of Bagan, is an unforgettable sight.

A taste for adventure is fuelling demand for the Irrawaddy, according to Andy Harmer, SVP membership & director, CLIA UK & Ireland. He said: "Notably, in 2016, UK river cruise passengers to destinations outside of Europe increased by 15 per cent, and this was largely due to the growth seen in people choosing to visit Asia. The Irrawaddy in particular is a route that until fairly recently few people visited.

"Yet now Myanmar is becoming a popular destination as visitors look to discover off-the-beaten-track experiences. As new routes along the river open up, more river cruise lines are sailing to this exciting part of the world to meet the demand of more travellers

wishing to experience the region's highlights such as tours of the historic capitals of Pagan and visiting A Kaut Taung to view Buddha carvings on the mountainside."

Cruises are generally combined with overnight stays in the evocative cities of Yangon, formerly Rangoon, and Mandalay, immortalised in the famous poem by Rudyard Kipling. As ships only sail during daylight hours passengers never miss any passing sights.

## A changing demographic

Pandaw Expeditions, which pioneered Irrawaddy cruises in the 90s, has reacted to the growing number of independent travellers by offering no single supplement on selected cruises bookable until 2019.

Founder and CEO, Paul Strachan, said: "The demographic of the solo traveller has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. We have tailored several of our expeditions in response to the growing demand from independent explorers seeking adventure combined with the personal attention and casual ambience that our elegant, small ships offer. We enjoy a loyal following of solo travellers and it's important that we look after those guests by offering them a cabin for single use at no additional cost."

APT introduced its Premium river cruise holidays in Myanmar last year and saw 85 per cent of bookings taken up by the UK market. As a result it is offering its new luxury ship Samatha to UK passengers in 2017 and >



PICTURE: SAUL WATERMAN

## SALES TIPS

1

The Irrawaddy delivers an authentic experience and places untouched by mass tourism, many of them only accessible by boat.

2

Cruises range from three nights - on the popular Bagan to Mandalay stretch - to 10 nights or more, offering clients plenty of flexibility.

3

Highlight the fact that river cruises are far less tiring than land-based tours.

4

Ships are small, some carrying just 20 passengers, and provide a very intimate experience.

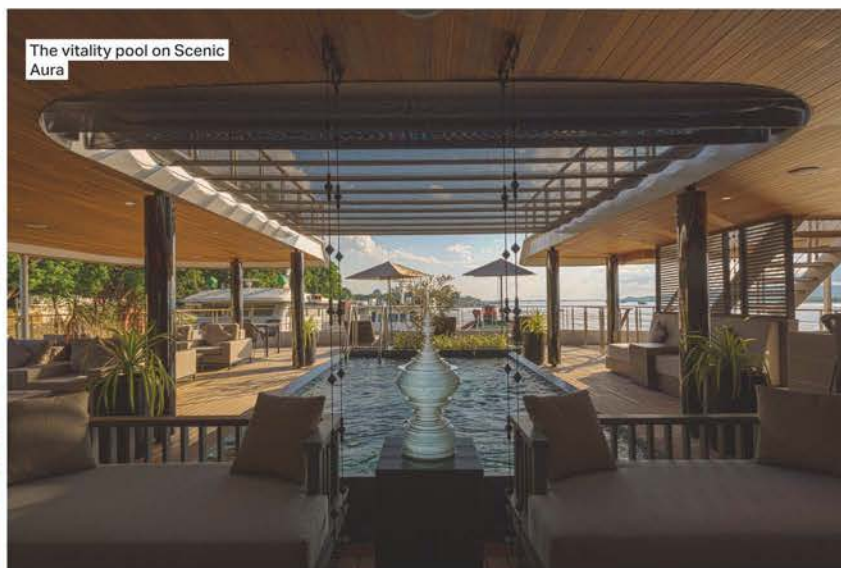
5

The main sailing season is September to April, with November to February offering the cooler dry season.

Amazing experiences abound on an Irrawaddy river cruise



Accommodation on RV Kindat Pandaw has a teak finish



The vitality pool on Scenic Aura

## SELL IT

**BAMBOO TRAVEL** has a new 13-night Mandalay to Yangon: The Golden Land cruise from £4,795 per person, including B&B accommodation in hotels, 10-night full-board cruise, cruise excursions, private tours in Mandalay and Yangon, flights and transfers.  
020 7720 9285  
bambootravel.co.uk

**WENDY WU TOURS** offers an 11-night Irrawaddy Voyager tour with a seven-night sailing on a Pandaw vessel and half-board hotel accommodation in Yangon and Mandalay. Departing November 1, from £3,490 per person, including flights, full-board accommodation on the cruise, flights and transfers, and no single supplement.  
0800 1445 608  
wendywutours.co.uk

**SCENIC'S** 15-night Mystical Irrawaddy cruise on the all-inclusive Scenic Aura, with facilities including a butler service, swimming pool and open bar, is priced from £5,590 per person for travel in April 2018, including half-board hotel accommodation, 10-night cruise, flights and transfers.  
0800 274 3116 scenic.co.uk

## OTHER OPERATORS

**Riviera Travel**  
01283 742 300  
rivieratravel.co.uk

**Saga Holidays**  
0800 414 383 saga.co.uk

Clients won't want to forget their camera when cruising the Irrawaddy...



2018. New itineraries include the 16-night Hidden Wonders of Myanmar tour, which includes watching the sunset over Bagan.

Angela Waite, APT's head of sales and commercial, said: "A reason why river cruising in Myanmar holds such appeal is that it allows travellers to explore the culture and sights while staying in the comfort of what is essentially a floating luxury hotel."

Inspired perhaps by the area's temples, monasteries and pagodas, Belmond has tapped into the spiritual nature of the destination by offering its first mindfulness cruises on the Irrawaddy. With a seven-night itinerary departing on 7 October or a three-night taster cruise departing on 11 October, passengers can embark on expert-led journeys of self-discovery, including one-to-one coaching, yoga and meditation with Brian Hilliard and Shannon van Staden from specialist operator Mindfulness Journeys.

Sanctuary Retreats is launching a new four-night itinerary, taking in both the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers, which will be available on five departures

on Sanctuary Ananda in 2018. Renette Hartridge, Sanctuary Retreats UK sales director, said no other ship currently offered the cruise and it would appeal to repeat Myanmar clients.

Following the success of its first classical music voyage along the Irrawaddy earlier this year, The Strand Cruise will host its first photography cruise with professional photographer Lucas Gurdjian on 16 October. And on 13 November and 12 February 2018, classical musicians from the Opera de Paris and Orchestre de Paris will return to the ship.

Amadeus River Cruises, a relative newcomer to the UK market and now sold through Fred. River Cruises, has a seven-night Road to Mandalay itinerary, which will soon be offered to agents as a full package, rather than on a cruise-only basis.

Finally, David Binns, head of product & commercial, Avalon Waterways, commented: "Due to its size, our smaller Panorama Suite ship Avalon Myanmar can sail the Upper Irrawaddy, the 250-mile stretch of the river which is less visited and where experiences include visiting remote villages, as well as the chance to see the rare Irrawaddy dolphin." 🐬



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# A Five-Country Sailing East on

THE LOWER DANUBE, OFFERING HISTORY AND CULTURE WHILE GIVING A DIFFERENT VIEW OF EUROPE, IS IDEAL FOR CLIENTS SEEKING A RIVER CRUISE WITH A DIFFERENCE

**M**ighty by any standards, the Danube is the world's only river with a waltz named after it, and the only one to flow through or form part of a border with so many countries. I have sailed this famous waterway before, but only the upper part. Ports behind the former Iron Curtain are less well known, and this is where my AmaWaterways river cruise is set to take me.

## On board AmaSerena

A coach whisks me from Budapest airport to join the 164-passenger AmaSerena, where my spick and span cabin awaits, as does stewardess Marta, ready to show me how to operate the Apple TV/computer, pointing out where to find the hairdryer and reminding me to always lock the balcony door when I go out. Mine is a twin-balcony cabin; one cabin is furnished with a table and two chairs, the other, a French balcony, has floor-to-ceiling glass doors.

An evening cocktail party is followed by the mandatory safety briefing and welcome dinner. I am invited to eat in the 28-guest Chef's Table Restaurant, which offers a many-splendoured tasting menu comprising regional specialties and local wines.

Then it's time to set sail so that everyone can see Budapest's evening illuminations before returning to the berth. It isn't until the following morning that the cruise proper starts with the first of a daily programme of excursions: sightseeing, cycling and walking (the latter graded according to ability), all included in the fare.

## Wine and phantoms

At Vukovar in Croatia, excursions offered include a Yugoslav Civil War tour and a visit to Ilok where I tour 15th century wine cellars and enjoy tastings. Excellent wines indeed, they were served at our Queen's coronation. Next stop is Novi Sad, Serbia's second city, where AmaSerena moors for a walking tour.

Our guide explains that the 1999 war devastated the city, though in recent years much of it has been pleasantly rebuilt. That evening there is an optional visit to Petrovaradin Fortress. It has an interesting clock tower with a 'Reversed Clock'; the small hand shows minutes, the big hand shows hours. This



# Odyssey: The Danube

## STAR ITINERARY

AmaWaterways 'Gems of Southeast Europe' cruise sails from Budapest to Rousse (or reverse). 2018 Prices from £2,045 pp for a river view cabin.  
Freephone 0800 320 2336;  
[amawaterways.co.uk](http://amawaterways.co.uk)

AmaWaterways offers a 'Fly Free' promotion with complimentary transfers valid on 2018 bookings made before 31 August, 2017. This includes all European itineraries and the Mekong.



AmaSerena sets sail



The natural wonders of Belogradchik

"We encourage travel agents with clients who may be familiar with the more popular Budapest-to-Vilshofen route to offer this as an alternative"

## SALES TIPS

For new-to-river cruisers, it's worth pointing out that river cruise holidays give clients time to explore destinations while enjoying scenic views along the way.

River cruises are destination focused. Most offer a selection of shore excursions in each destination, so even if clients have visited before you can offer them new experiences.

enabled Danube fishermen to see the time from a distance.

In the Fortress, we are given torches to explore a maze of supposedly haunted underground corridors. It looks creepy enough to house the odd phantom but no-one comes across anything ghostly, so maybe it's just a story.

Overnight the engines rumble and we're off again, this time to Belgrade, a mix of architectural styles from Ottoman to Art Nouveau. Visitor attractions include the white-walled Church of St Sava, the world's second biggest Orthodox church, and Mount Avala, topped by the Balkans' tallest tower. A lift whizzes us up to the viewing platform and café with its sweeping views of Belgrade.

### King Decebalus and the Iron Gates

Next day is a full day sailing, common on ocean cruises but unusual on rivers. The good thing about spending a day onboard is the chance for clients to enjoy the facilities – heated pool with swim-up bar, fitness centre and in-room Internet, films and music.

We pass through the Iron Gates, a gorge between Serbia and Romania. Gliding past a convent, people – possibly nuns, but it's hard to say for sure from a distance – wave from the balcony. Then there's another photo opportunity when a gigantic head hewn in the rock appears. It belongs to Rome's enemy King Decebalus, carved for eternity into the limestone cliffs.

### Off the beaten track in Bulgaria

Next morning, sunshine and birdsong welcome us to Vidin, a back-of-beyond Bulgarian town. I choose the Belogradchik excursion, a village with an ancient fortress perched on the mountain slopes.

A steep walk over rocky ground takes me past amphitheatres of UNESCO-listed rock formations with whimsical names: the Madonna, the horseman, Adam and Eve, the cuckoo. It's incredible to think they are around 230 million years old.

Later that day I visit Rousse, (sometimes 'Ruse'), a photogenic town with flower-filled parks, pedestrianised areas and couples entwined on benches.

On the final day, the ship berths at Giurgiu in Romania. Those guests who have chosen a post-cruise stay are whisked to Bucharest and have the option of a full-day excursion in the capital with its tree-lined boulevards and even a nod to French panache with a fake Arc de Triomphe.

As Jamie Loizou, sales, marketing and digital director, AmaWaterways, says, "The Lower Danube is a fascinating stretch of river which includes lesser-known destinations of Serbia, Croatia and Bulgaria. Our 'Gems of South East Europe' cruise passes through the scenic Iron Gates as well as Belogradchik, one of Bulgaria's natural wonders. We encourage travel agents with clients who may be familiar with the more popular Budapest-to-Vilshofen route to offer this as an alternative." 



Bustling Belgrade



The convent by the Iron Gates gorge

### FAST FACTS

AmaWaterways  
all-inclusive  
benefits

#### Shore excursions

All meals on  
board. Wine, beer,  
soft drinks with  
lunch /dinner

Apple TV/com-  
puter (European  
fleet), internet  
access and WiFi

Bicycles for  
clients' use



The library on AmaSerena



One of the comfortable staterooms



A suite bathroom

# Paradise Island cruises with Fred. Olsen



**W**hite, sandy beaches, quiet hideaways and shimmering, crystal-clear waters... the islands of the Indian Ocean are a holidaymaker's paradise!

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is offering an array of sumptuous two-week Indian Ocean getaways in 2018, which are ideal for guests who just want to relax, unwind and discover some of the most beautiful – and remote – islands on earth.

Guests can choose from six Fred. Olsen Indian Ocean Islands fly-cruises next year, from October to December, offering a range of idyllic itineraries and destinations, all within a 16-night fly-cruise holiday.

## **Making dreams come true**

A Fred. Olsen exploration of the enchanting islands of the Indian Ocean – the smallest of the world's three main oceans – is designed to turn dreams into reality.

Colourful Madagascar is home to extraordinary wildlife, such as black lemurs and panther-chameleons, whereas Mauritius is the place to be for magnificent natural wonders, such as the breathtaking and vibrant Seven Coloured Earths sand dunes.

An Indian Ocean fly-cruise with Fred. Olsen offers something for everyone: history-lovers can set about uncovering Zanzibar's fascinating past, while thrill-

hunters can take an exhilarating helicopter ride over one of the world's most active volcanoes, Piton de la Fournaise, on Réunion Island. Meanwhile, sunseekers can relax on one of the many enticing soft-powder beaches of the Seychelles.

## **Getting 'closer' to the destination**

Fred. Olsen tailors its holidays to suit all appetites and interests, bringing the world's most incredible destinations closer to its guests.

Not everyone has the time to sail the oceans to reach the most spellbinding and exotic places on earth. Fred. Olsen's fly-and-cruise itineraries provide the



Fred. Olsen's smaller ships mean that guests can benefit from a friendly, more personal service on board and soon get to know their fellow cruisers and crew alike

perfect solution for guests who prefer to take a shorter holiday, but who are keen to explore magical and far-flung corners of the globe.

With a Fred. Olsen cruise, the destination is key: inspirational itineraries are carefully crafted to give guests the chance to explore, discover and relax.

#### **All the joys of smaller-ship cruising**

Fred. Olsen brings you the best in smaller-ship cruising. On board the well-appointed Boudicca – which carries only 880 guests – holidaymakers can experience a 'home-from-home' atmosphere, with all the comforts of a country house hotel.

Fred. Olsen's smaller ships mean that guests can benefit from a friendly, more personal service on board and soon get to know their fellow cruisers and crew alike, while being able to take advantage of all the facilities that they need to make their holiday to remember!

Whether holidaymakers want to enjoy some winter sun, mark a special event or experience exotic cultures, Fred. Olsen has the ideal Indian Ocean fly-cruise to suit every taste and occasion! ●

**For further information call Trade Support on 01473 746 164, or visit our dedicated agent website at [fredolsencruises.com/agent](http://fredolsencruises.com/agent)**

# Special occasion

Cruise lines are pulling out all the stops to curate voyages that cater for those more unusual requests



Fine dining for two on board Tauck ships

Have fun with the family on a Uniworld cruise



**A**re your clients looking to escape on a romantic break, or perhaps celebrate a wedding or second honeymoon?

Have you found it a challenge putting together packages for clients looking to holiday with all the family, grandparents, nieces and nephews?

Or do you need inspiration on which experience to suggest for clients who have saved for years for that once-in-a-lifetime luxury trip?

We discover what special occasion voyages are available for experiences that will create memories to last a lifetime.

## Multigenerational holidays

If you have clients who are reluctant cruisers but want to take their extended family away on a holiday, a river cruise is a great introduction to cruising.

And specialists such as Uniworld are ticking all the boxes when it comes to catering for the needs of all the family.

The operator has a whole programme of Generations cruises, which feature a raft of itineraries, excursions and on-board activities that meet the demands of every member of the family, from kids to octogenarians.

The cruises are available for families on

selected departures of the brand's most popular routes, taking in the sights and cultural highlights of the Danube, the Seine and the Rhine, alongside explorations of Italy.

The departures have on-board Family Hosts for Junior (4-11 years) and Young (12-18 years) cruisers and offer activities such as cooking classes, soda sommelier sessions, behind-the-scenes tours with the captain, craft workshops and local language classes.

**How much?** Prices for the 10-day Danube Discovery & Prague voyage on 6 August lead in at £3,419 per person based on double occupancy, with a 50% discount for young travellers aged 4-18 years.

**To book:** [uniworld.com/uk/](http://uniworld.com/uk/)

## Second honeymoons

The number of people getting hitched for the second – and third – time is on the increase, so to tap into this growing market, Tauck has put together the perfect river cruise itinerary.

The 14-day French Escapade cruises along the Rhone River and the Saone, taking in romantic European cities such as Monte-Carlo, Provence, Lyon, Burgundy, and the city of love, Paris.

Loved-up couples will have the chance to travel into the countryside to

# cruise inspiration



A spa suite bathroom on Azamara Club Cruises



Seabourn's wellness programme is a first of its kind available at sea

## SELL IT

With tips from Seabourn's Concierge team...

1

After the cruise, if your clients are on an evening flight why not book them a day room to relax? They will then be collected by car and taken to the airport for their flight home.

2

Because of her size, Seabourn Odyssey can get into the Caribbean ports and islands that larger ships cannot.

3

Make sure clients tell you their favourite tippie so that you can request ahead, and ensure that the mini-bar is filled with their choice of alcohol.

4

If it's a real special occasion such as a birthday or wedding anniversary, let Seabourn know and it will help your client celebrate, whether with champagne on deck, a cake, or their suite decked out with rose petals, balloons and towel animal creations.

visit some of the world's best vineyards, discover river towns with Roman roots and lingering traces of medieval magic in their streets, experience the cowboy traditions and cuisine of La Camargue, explore a palace fit for a pope and see an abbey that was once one of the most powerful buildings in Europe.

**How much?** Prices start at £4,360 per person.

**To book:** [tauck.co.uk](http://tauck.co.uk)

### Nature crusaders

Are your clients looking for a once-in-a-lifetime cruise that also provides unbeatable views of a major natural event? Azamara Club Cruises has put together an 11-night Arabia and India Holiday Voyage timed to sail across the Indian Ocean from Muscat to Mumbai just as the total solar eclipse takes place on 26 December 2019.

The voyage begins in Dubai on 17 December with an overnight on-board stay before setting sail for Doha, then on to Abu Dhabi, where guests can race on a Formula One Track. A day at sea follows before docking in Muscat to explore the preserved old city, splendid beaches and traditional souks during an overnight stay.

The Azamara Quest then sets sail for Mumbai, with the solar eclipse on the agenda

for the second night at sea – definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

**How much?** Prices for the 11-night cruise lead in at £2,437 per person (flights excluded).

**To book:** [azamaraclubcruises.co.uk](http://azamaraclubcruises.co.uk)

### Happy hens

If your hens are looking for a cruise that will leave them feeling chilled and revitalised, give them the heads-up on Seabourn Odyssey, which is launching Spa and Wellness with Dr. Andrew Weil, a mindful living programme offering guests a holistic spa and wellness experience.

The first-ever programme of its kind available at sea, and destined for every ship in the fleet, it will be led by the on-board Mindful Living Coach, and there will be daily practice of mindful meditation and yoga, with some sessions on a complimentary basis.

The programme will also offer guests some complimentary Mind and Body seminars such as Spontaneous Happiness & Spontaneous Healing; Anti-Inflammatory Foods; and an Introduction to Mindful Meditation. ⚓

**How much?** Prices for a seven-day cruise departing on 3 February 2018 start from £2,199 per person, sharing a suite.

**To book:** [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)

WORDS: REBECCA BARNES, ANGELA CRONIN

# Love Islands

The idyllic Indian Ocean has long been synonymous with romance, but it's not just the honeymoon market that falls head over heels in love with this captivating part of the world



**F**or centuries, the Indian Ocean has been a region of fascination for seafaring explorers, no doubt captivated by the warm, turquoise waters, heady scents and exotic islands they encountered while making their way along the Spice Route.

Today's cruisers travel this stretch of sea in far greater luxury and style than voyagers of old, but the Indian Ocean's ports of call still continue to enchant, with picture-perfect white beaches, palm trees dotted along shorelines, enticing coral atolls and exotic flora and fauna.

Some cruise itineraries only skim the surface of what the Indian Ocean region has to offer, giving passengers a small taster, while others get right into the heart of the destination. Many cruises stop at Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, off the south west coast of India. For some, Colombo will be the embarkation point, making it possible to add a post- or pre-cruise stay to explore a bit more of the country.

An important trading post for centuries, Colombo has a fascinating history that charts Arab, Dutch and Portuguese occupations. Most tours take in the Pettah Market area, where you will find the historic candy-striped Jami-ul Alfar Mosque and the Khan Clock Tower, a popular local landmark.

This is the area where traders sell gold and jewellery.

A longer stay could include a visit to the town of Hambantota, formerly known as Magama Kingdom, or Galle, home to an impressive 17th-century Dutch fort.

Mauritius, meanwhile, has given traditional get away-from-it-all Indian Ocean destinations such as the Maldives and Seychelles a run for their money in recent years, thanks to its mountain ranges, fine beaches, stunning coral reefs and picturesque villages. It's also becoming a popular Indian Ocean cruise port of call.

### A force of nature

The capital, Port Louis, is diverse and multicultural, with Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Chinese and Creole districts, markets and boutiques. For nature lovers, the Natural History Museum houses the only known skeleton of the extinct dodo in the world.

Those lucky enough to call at Madagascar will be treated to an enticing blend of African and Indonesian influences, traditional villages, tropical rainforests and natural wonders. A visit to its main attraction, Nosy Be island could include a tour of a rum distillery or a wander through the rainforest to spot ring-tailed lemur and other wildlife.

East of Madagascar and south of Mauritius is Reunion Island, a French territory. Passengers on ships stopping at Reunion's capital, St Denis, can explore its botanical garden, Jardin de l'Etat, view paintings by Picasso and Gauguin at its modern art museum, and wander inside the Notre Dame-inspired Saint-Denis Cathedral.

North-east of Madagascar are the 115 islands that make up the Seychelles archipelago. The 'inner islands' of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue are the most visited, with Mahé most likely to be on a cruise itinerary. The island has the Seychelles' capital and port, Victoria; some ships overnight here, en route to or from South Africa.

Don't confuse the Seychelles' capital with the similar sounding Malé, the bustling capital of the Maldives. Here, passengers can explore the shops of Majeedhee Magu, the main road on the island, and visit the 17th-century Hukuru Mosque.

Smaller ships, such as Silversea's Silver Discoverer, can visit some of the smaller Maldives ports, including Hanifaru Bay and Olhugiri in the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve.

The reserve comprises 75 islands, 13 of which are inhabited by a population of approximately 12,000 people, as well as an abundance of wildlife such as frigate birds and turtles.

Mauritius is now a popular cruise port of call



## ISLAND HOPPING

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines has a 14-night Islands of the Indian Ocean voyage on Boudicca, departing Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, on 18 October 2018 and heading south-west to explore the Maldives and Seychelles, before disembarking at Port Louis in Mauritius. Among many highlights is a Silhouette Island sunset cruise. Cruise-only prices start at £1,799pp. [fredolsencruises.com](http://fredolsencruises.com)

## THE SPICE IS RIGHT

An overnight on-board stay in Colombo and a voyage across the Indian Ocean are included in Viking Cruises' 36-day Voyage of Marco Polo itinerary from Athens to Bangkok. The trip crosses the Suez Canal and traces the great Spice Routes on board the elegant Viking Spirit. Prices start from £11,235pp, including air fares and excursions, in August 2018. [vikingcruises.co.uk](http://vikingcruises.co.uk)

## MAKE A DATE

Ideal for clients who are reluctant to fly, P&O Cruises' 99-night round-trip Western Circumnavigation from Southampton calls at 32 ports, including Colombo in Sri Lanka, where there is a choice of full- and half-day excursions. The cruise, on board Arcadia, starts at £9,999pp, departing 9 January 2018 and crossing the International Date Line on 14 February. [pocruises.com](http://pocruises.com)

## CRYSTAL CLEAR

Madagascar, Reunion Island and Mauritius are among highlights of a 15-day Jewels of the Indian Ocean voyage with Crystal Cruises from Cape Town. Crystal Symphony calls at Maputo in Mozambique; Taolanaro, Madagascar; Reunion Island; and Mauritius, where the ship ports overnight. From £4,561pp cruise only, departing 7 January, 2018. [crystalcruises.co.uk](http://crystalcruises.co.uk)



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The beach in Port Launay, Mahe, sits at the entrance to the National Park



PHOTO: RAYMOND SAHUQUET / STB

## SUITE SENSATIONS

Silversea offers an 11-day Maldives to Colombo cruise on Silver Discoverer, embarking Male on 24 January, 2018, taking in the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve and sailing on to Vangaaru and Uligamu, some of the northernmost islands. Then it's on to India, followed by Sri Lanka, for Galle and Colombo. Prices start at £6,840, cruise only, in an Explorer Suite. [silverseacruises.co.uk](http://silverseacruises.co.uk)

## ISLAND LIFE

Is this the dream itinerary? Seabourn has a 55-night Africa and Indian Ocean Isles voyage on 23 January, 2018, departing Rio de Janeiro, visiting Namibia and South Africa before calling at Madagascar, Reunion, Mauritius, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The ship sails on to Thailand and Malaysia before reaching Singapore, where guests depart. Prices start from £17,999pp. [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)

## TRAVEL IN STYLE

Combining a highly saleable itinerary with great value, Cunard's iconic Queen Mary 2 has a 33-day cruise from Southampton to Fremantle, leaving on 10 January, 2018. It takes in the Indian Ocean destinations of Reunion and Mauritius, as well as Namibia and South Africa, before sailing to Perth. Balcony staterooms start from £4,749pp, cruise only. [cunard.co.uk](http://cunard.co.uk)

## WORLD PERFECT

The new Cruise and Maritime Voyages ship, Columbus, sails the Indian Ocean on the final leg of its 2018 round-the-world cruise. Guests can book certain sectors, which are currently eligible for a buy-one-get-one-free offer plus £300 flight credit. A 14-night cruise from Singapore to Dubai, calling at Colombo on 31 March 2018, costs £1,989pp, cruise only. [cruiseandmaritime.com](http://cruiseandmaritime.com)

WORDS: LISA JAMES



**ENTER NOW**  
Entries close 15th September  
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# WAVE AWARDS 2018



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# The Wave Awards 2018 has arrived...



## The judges

**John Honeywell,**  
aka Captain Greybeard  
(Chairman)

**Louise Robinson,**  
editor, World of Cruising  
(Deputy chairwoman)

**Rebecca Barnes,**  
editor, Cruise Trade News  
and Cruise Destinations

**Claire Irvin,**  
head of travel editorial,  
The Telegraph

**Giles Hawke,**  
chief executive, Cosmos  
Tours and Cruises

**Tony Roberts,**  
vice president, UK and  
Europe, Princess Cruises

**Christopher Edgington,**  
vice president marketing,  
P&O Cruises

**Antonio Paradiso,**  
managing director UK  
and Ireland, MSC Cruises

**David Ness,**  
cruise director,  
Trailfinders

**Lisa McAuley,**  
UK and Ireland managing  
director, Silversea

**Sally Winfield,**  
chief executive officer,  
Accord Marketing

**Nikki White,**  
director of destinations  
and sustainability, ABTA

**T**he cruise industry in the UK has a lot to be proud of. A record 1.9 million holidaymakers from the UK and Ireland took an ocean cruise in 2016, while river cruise operators experienced an 11 per cent growth in passenger numbers last year.

This is a direct result of agents and cruise lines working hard to sell the cruise experience to their clients, and the team at Real Response Media is keen to recognise these achievements.

So we are thrilled to announce that the date has been set for the third annual Wave Awards, otherwise known as the Oscars of the cruise industry.

The eagerly-anticipated event, which recognises and rewards excellence in the cruise holiday industry, will take place on 1 March 2018 at the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in London's Covent Garden.

There are 32 categories to enter within five main award category groups, which include cruise line; on-board; agent; industry; and ports and destinations.

All entry submissions will be judged by our panel of cruise industry experts, who will also judge and

announce the winner of the Grand Prix Award for Cruise Line of the Year on the awards evening.

To enter the awards costs £95 for the first entry and £75 for each entry thereafter. However (and this is new for 2018), any organisation entering five award categories will receive its sixth entry free.

**Entries are open now, with a deadline of 13 October for submissions.**

Thanks to headline sponsor Saga Cruises, headline media sponsor the Telegraph Media Group, and our award sponsors Accord Marketing, Azamara Club Cruises, Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines, Ports Direct, Thomson Cruises, Titan Travel and Uniworld, the evening is set to be a glittering and glamorous affair with the cream of the cruise industry putting on their glad rags for what promises to be the cruise event of the year.

**So what are you waiting for? Visit [thewaveawards.com](http://thewaveawards.com) to create your entries, and if you require any help with entering categories and advice on sponsorship or want to book a table for the awards ceremony, don't hesitate to contact Leah Armstrong on 07974 625614.**

**Claire Brighton,**  
senior commercial  
manager, Advantage  
Travel Partnership

**Lucia Rowe,**  
head of A-ROSA UK

**Juliet Archer,**  
managing director, Blue  
Water Holidays

**Dave Mills,**  
product and commercial  
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**Richard Tarrant,**  
head of marketing,  
Voyages to Antiquity



# "We have a Nobu restaurant on board each of our ocean ships"

**Natalie Read**, regional sales manager for Crystal Cruises, talks Asian cuisine, Italian destinations and Arctic expeditions

## Why is your cruise line the best of all cruise lines?

Crystal is innovating all the time, which makes it the most exciting cruise line in the ultra-luxury sector, with aeroplanes, luxury yachts and new river cruise vessels. We are totally revamping our existing ocean ships before introducing a new style of ocean cruises for the future... watch this space! Also we have the best all-inclusive food and wine at sea; not many people know this but we have a Nobu restaurant on board each of our ocean ships.

## If your cruise line was a famous person, who would it be and why?

Grace Kelly – beautiful, elegant, stylish, unpretentious, classic and just a little bit sassy!

## How long have you worked for your cruise line?

I have worked with the team at Crystal for seven years.

## Which geographical area do you cover?

The South of England and the Channel Islands.

## What's the funniest thing that has happened to you on the road?

Losing my car in Tunbridge Wells. I was searching for hours and had to get people to help me. Embarrassingly, it turned out that I was looking in the wrong car park!



## What's the strangest question you have ever been asked about cruise?

If I don't get off the ship do I still have to pay all the port taxes? A strange client and a thrifty one at that too!

## How many of your cruise line's ships have you sailed on? Do you have a favourite?

Do I really have to choose? My first-ever cruise was on Crystal Symphony, so I feel very sentimental about her but I also love Crystal Serenity. Last year I got to experience our brand new river yacht, Crystal Mozart, and I was totally blown away, which you don't always expect to happen after seven years with a company.

## Do you have a favourite onboard restaurant and why?

All the restaurants are fabulous, but my favourite has to be Silk Road – the Asian restaurant on board both Crystal Symphony and Crystal Serenity. It features the cuisine of famed master chef Nobu Matsuhisa and also has a lovely sushi bar. I can't wait to try our new restaurant Churrascaria, which will serve Brazilian-inspired tapas and Caipirinhas.

## Which port would you definitely disembark in? What would you do there?

Definitely Sorrento, as there is so much to see and do. Luckily, each time I have been there Crystal has overnighted, so it gives you

plenty of time to enjoy the delights of the Amalfi coast, Pompeii, Capri and more.

## And which port would you opt to stay onboard – and why?

I never stay on board unless I have been to the port numerous times, as I love travelling and get so excited opening my eyes each morning to a new destination and adventure.

## Which cruise is on your bucket list?

The North West Passage. This is a 32-day journey travelling through the virtually untouched Arctic region to engage with the local Inuit communities, interact with wildlife and experience expedition-style cruising. It looks totally inspiring. This is the last planned Arctic itinerary for Crystal's classic ocean ships but it does offer a glimpse

into the experiences to come with Crystal Yacht Expedition Cruises.

## If you didn't work in the cruise industry, what do you think you would do?

I would have loved to work in the performing arts. My family always said I was a little actress and

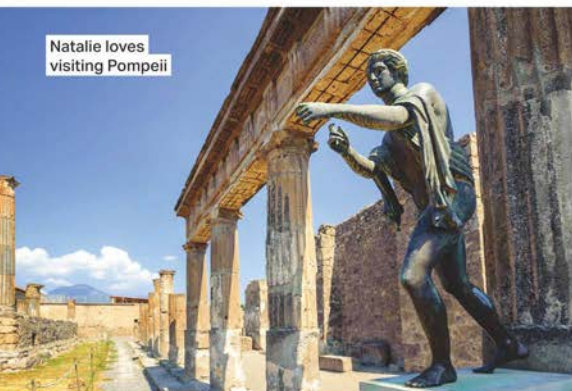
I can just see myself starring alongside Daniel Craig (left) in a Bond film.



## If you could name a ship, what would you call it?

Hope – and it would be a charity ship cruising around the world spreading love, as we all need a little love in our lives.

Natalie loves visiting Pompeii



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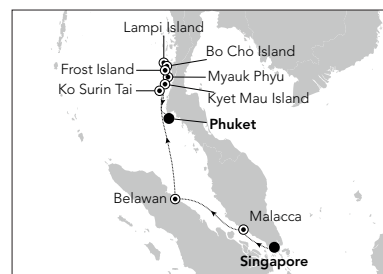
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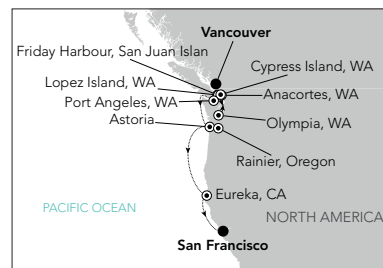


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