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JANUARY 2019



EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR

Colette Doyle

colette.doyle@realresponsemedia.com

DEPUTY EDITOR

Gary Peters

ART EDITOR

Jason Keens

SUBEDITOR

Caroline Parish

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER

Paddy Orchard

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Chris Pitchford

chris.pitchford@realresponsemedia.com

For subscriptions and enquiries:

020 8444 2554

info@cruisetradenews.com

ALL ENQUIRIES +44 (0) 20 8444 2554

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DEPARTS: 9>, 23* Nov; 21> Dec 2019. 16 Jan 2020

Westerdam

DEPART: SINGAPORE
ARRIVE: HONG KONG

VISITS: *Nathon (Ko Samui), Laem Chabang (Bangkok, Thailand, overnight), Sihanoukville (Kompong Som, Cambodia), Phu My (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam), Da Nang (Hue), Halong Bay.*

Cruise fares from: Inside stateroom **£1,149**
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Signature suite **£2,589** Neptune suite **£4,279**

>Itinerary in reverse. *Itinerary & lead fare based on 23/11/19 (14-nights), on other dates ports may vary.
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- Overnight stay Laem Chabang
- Free upgrade ocean view to verandah

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per person

DEPARTS: 13 Nov*, 4, 22 Dec 2019; 22 Jan, 12 Feb, 4 Mar 2020

Koningsdam

DEPART: FT LAUDERDALE
ARRIVE: FT LAUDERDALE

VISITS: *Philipsburg (St Maarten), Castries (St Lucia), cruising Soufriere Bay, Bridgetown (Barbados), Fort de France (Martinique), Basseterre (St Kitts), St Thomas; Half Moon Cay (Bahamas).*

Cruise fares from: Inside stateroom **£1,149**
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Vista suite **£2,349** Signature suite **£3,569** Neptune suite **£4,249**

*Itinerary & lead fare based on 13/11/19.

- Includes a full day at our private island
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DEPARTS: 29 Apr*, 1 Jun, 7 Jul-, 10 Aug, 13 Sep-, 6 Oct- 2019

Koningsdam

DEPART: CIVITAVECCHIA (ROME)
ARRIVE: CIVITAVECCHIA (ROME)

VISITS: *Sarande (Albania), Katakolon (Olympia, Greece), Piraeus (Athens, overnight), Mykonos, Kusadasi (Ephesus, Turkey), Rhodes, Santorini, Naples (Italy).*

Cruise fares from: Inside stateroom **£1,199**
Ocean view stateroom **£1,699** Verandah stateroom **£1,699**
Vista suite **SOLD** Signature suite **SOLD** Neptune suite **£3,909**

*Itinerary & lead fare based on 29/04/19.

- Overnight stay in Piraeus (Athens)
- Free upgrade ocean view to verandah

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Letter

Welcome to the January issue



Happy new year to all our readers – we hope 2019 has got off to a good start for you. In our January issue you'll notice we have introduced a few different elements to change things up a little: first is Trend Watch; in this brand new column, we put the developments currently shaping the cruise market under the spotlight, beginning with those exciting new itineraries set to debut later this year.

Next is Winning Streak, a regular slot where we interview those fortunate enough to have picked up accolades at our 2018 Cruise Stars Awards, with the first being our triple-prize winner John Ferguson of Thorne Travel in Kilwinning, Scotland. Then we have our new in-depth interview feature: this month we're in conversation with Hurtigruten, discussing new ships, headline-grabbing environmental initiatives and a foray into Alaska.

Our series of guides to various ports around the world begins with an overview of award-winning Southampton, where we discover how it is paving the way for the future of cruise, thanks to a £12-million partnership investment with P&O Cruises.

Lastly, our Diary page takes a look at the lighter side of cruise, featuring all the latest industry events – be they conferences, gala dinners, receptions, campaign launches or keel-laying ceremonies.

Elsewhere in this issue we have a special three-page report on river cruising, a sector that continues to revitalise the entire cruise market; our regular dedicated river cruise feature, meanwhile, takes a trip down the exotic waterways of the Brahmaputra and the Amazon.

All in all, plenty of inspiration here to help kick-start your cruise holiday sales strategy over the coming 12 months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colette Doyle'.

Colette Doyle
Editor
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Michael Dupont

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Natalie Read

Regional Sales Manager

South

Tel: 07896 971316

natalieread@cruiseportfolio.co.uk

Jon Schofield

Regional Sales Manager

North & Scotland

Tel: 07841 921533

jon@cruiseportfolio.co.uk

Nan Short

Representative

Northern Ireland & Eire

Tel: 02890 642252

nanshort@btopenworld.com

Megan Saunders

Trade Sales Support

Executive

Tel: 020 7399 7602

megan@cruiseportfolio.co.uk



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BOOKINGS

Calling first mates

Virgin Voyages has opened registration for travel partners in the UK.

Known as First Mates, agents can find a dedicated trade website at FirstMates.com. The website will be the digital home to learn, engage and do business with Virgin.

On 6 February, the company will start 'Cabin Fever', an immersive learning campaign for First Mates on *Scarlet Lady's* cabins and suites as they are made ready to go on sale.

In addition, any First Mate who registers before the company's open-for-bookings date of 14 February could win tea with Richard Branson.

First Mates will be able to make bookings for the 2020 season through FirstMates.com as of 14 February.



Bookings for Virgin's first vessel will start on Valentine's Day

ITINERARIES



Istanbul will be on the Celestyal route again

Celestyal extends 2019 & 2020 sailings

Celestyal Cruises has announced expanded itineraries for this year and for 2020.

This year, the cruise line is extending its season into December and is returning to Istanbul for the first time since 2016 with a seven-day Eclectic Aegean itinerary, sailing six departures from 21 October to 25 November.

In addition, Celestyal has launched a seven-day Three Continents cruise, with five departures in December. The cruise calls at Alexandria and Port Said, Egypt, at Ashdod, Israel, at Kusadasi, Turkey,

at Limassol, Cyprus, and also at Rhodes.

In 2020, Celestyal Cruises is adding to its seven-day itineraries by offering a variety of choices. For example, the *Eclectic Cruise* will sail from 6 April to 11 May, with a second series of cruises beginning on 7 September and sailing through to the end of October 2020.

Furthermore, Celestyal Cruises' seven-day Idyllic Aegean cruises will sail from 18 May through to 31 August 2020, while the Three Continents cruise will sail from 2 March to 30 March, and 2 November to 28 December.

EVENT

CLIA reveals this year's theme and emissions pledge

CLIA has revealed that the theme for this year's conference is 'next generation'.

In addition, it says that Azamara Club Cruises' president and chief executive officer Larry Pimentel will be one of the keynote speakers.

The CLIA conference takes place in Southampton from 15-17 May.

The theme explores what cruise lines are doing to shape holidays for the travellers of the future through innovation, investment and experiences.

In addition, CLIA has outlined a "strong first step" to cut cruise carbon emissions by 40 per cent by 2030.

Progress will be measured against a 2008 fleet baseline, and emissions rates will be calculated based on the industry fleet's total carbon emissions, ship berths and distance travelled.

According to CLIA, the reduction will be helped by innovative technologies in ship design and propulsion, such as LNG-powered ships, of which there could be 25 by 2025. CLIA will report annually on progress towards the target.

APPOINTMENTS



Royal develops new training programme

Royal Caribbean Cruises is working with the Association of Professional Sales (APS) to create a new sales training programme. The company aims to provide EMEA sales members with a digital sales training academy, focusing on the latest university-led sales skill sets, education and ethics. In addition, the RCCL EMEA leadership team will provide their sales teams with various levels

of external sales professional accreditations throughout 2019, backed by the APS. RCCL EMEA VP and managing director Stuart Leven said: "We're thrilled that by the end of this process, all of our EMEA sales professionals will be invested in and tested on their ethical selling skills, and those who pass the independent APS test will be professionally registered."

COMPETITION

And that's a wrap...

Last Christmas, we did things a little differently here at *Cruise Trade News*. We joined forces with Saga to bring you the cruising version of a traditional advent calendar, in print and digital formats. More than 1,100 agents registered to play the competition and there were more than 5,750 plays. And we can now reveal the winner of the final grand prize. Congratulations to Samantha Voce at Hays Travel, who has won a seven-night Saga river cruise for two. Saga Holidays & Cruise head of trade sales Iain Powell said: "All of us at Saga want to congratulate Samantha on winning a seven-night river cruise for two, travelling in 2019. "This was the headline prize in our advent calendar competition, in partnership with *Cruise Trade News*, which gave agents yet more ways to be rewarded for their continued support." Thank you all for entering the competition. We hope you enjoyed the cruise advent calendar.



A-ROSA River Cruises is opening a UK-registered sales and marketing office – the first international office to open outside Germany. As part of this, **Lucia Rowe** has been promoted to the newly created role of UK managing director.



Riviera Travel has named **Tom Morgan** as its new national sales manager. Morgan, who joined Riviera Travel in 2014 as an account manager, was most recently international sales and marketing manager at Riviera.



Princess Cruises has announced the appointment of **Rebecca Kelly** to the newly created position of senior sales manager for Ireland. Kelly will start her new role on 18 March, based in Dublin.



Fred Olsen Cruise Lines has confirmed the appointment of its first-ever dedicated river sales manager. **Keith Norman** is responsible for a small team aimed at growing the company's river cruise product, currently operated on the river ship *Brabant*.

Wave Awards 7th March 2019

De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms

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Wave Awards 2019 shortlist

WAVE
AWARDS 2019



The shortlist for the most prestigious awards in the cruise industry has been revealed, full details below. The winners of the Wave Awards will be announced at a glamorous event on 7 March at London's De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms

OCEAN & RIVER CATEGORIES

Best Ocean Cruise Line

- Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines
- Marella Cruises
- MSC Cruises
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
- Saga Cruises

Best River Cruise Line

- Amadeus River Cruises
- Avalon Waterways
- Emerald Waterways
- Saga Holidays
- Titan Travel

Best Luxury Ocean Cruise Line

- Crystal Cruises
- Cunard
- Oceania Cruises
- Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- Seabourn

Best Luxury River Cruise Line

- AmaWaterways
- Avalon Waterways
- Crystal River Cruises
- Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection
- Scenic

Best Premium Cruise Line

- Celebrity Cruises
- Holland America Line

Best Expedition Cruise Line

- Aurora Expeditions
- G Adventures
- Hapag-Lloyd Cruises

Best for Solo Travellers

- Crystal Cruises
- Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines
- Hebridean Island Cruises
- Saga Cruises
- Titan Travel
- Voyages to Antiquity

Best Specialist Cruise Line

- Azamara Club Cruises
- Cruise & Maritime Voyages
- Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines
- Hebridean Island Cruises
- Star Clippers
- The Majestic Line (Scotland)
- Voyages to Antiquity

Best New Ship Launch

- Azamara Club Cruises – *Azamara Pursuit*
- Marella Cruises – *Marella Explorer*
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Line – *Symphony of the Seas*
- Seabourn – *Seabourn Ovation*

Best Value-for-money Cruise Line

- Amadeus River Cruises
- Avalon Waterways
- Celestyal Cruises
- Cruise & Maritime Voyages
- Emerald Waterways
- Marella Cruises
- Saga Cruises
- Voyages to Antiquity

Best Family Cruise Line

- MSC Cruises
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Line

AGENT CATEGORIES

Best Retail Agent

- Kuoni
- Trailfinders

Best Non-Retail Agent

- Bolsover Cruise Club
- Cruise Direction
- Cruise Nation
- CruiseKings
- Iglu Cruise
- Jetline Cruise
- ROL Cruise

Best Online Agent

- Cruise Nation
- CruiseKings
- Iglu Cruise
- The Cruise Specialists
- WTH UK

Best Agent Consortia or Homeworking Agency

- Advantage Travel Partnership
- Hays Travel Homeworking Team
- The Travel Network Group

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

Best Advertising, PR or Marketing Campaign

- Accord Marketing – Cruise.co: Making Waves in the UK Cruise Market
- Grenada Tourism Authority – #FreeToWonder
- Marella Cruises – MarellaByU
- Planet Cruise – The Planet Cruise River and Luxury Cruise Show
- ROL Cruise – Cruise Miles Loyalty Programme

Best Escorted & Specialist Tour Operator

- Cosmos Tours
- G Adventures
- Intrepid Travel
- Saga Holidays
- Scenic
- Titan Travel

Best Digital or Web-based Platform or Service

- Azamara Club Cruises
- Cruise Nation
- Jetline Cruise

Best Environmental Initiative

- CroisiEurope
- G Adventures
- Norwegian Cruise Line

Best Transfer Service

- Saga Cruises
- Titan Travel

Best Use of Technology

- Ethos Farm
- Marella Cruises
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
- Celebrity Cruises

ON-BOARD CATEGORIES

Best for Accommodation

- Holland America Line
- Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- Saga Cruises

Best for Cuisine

- Celebrity Cruises
- Crystal Cruises
- Oceania Cruises
- Saga Cruises

- Seabourn
- SeaDream Yacht Club

Best for Entertainment

- Holland America Line
- Marella Cruises
- MSC Cruises

Best for Enrichment

- Celestyal Cruises
- Holland America Line
- Scenic
- Voyages to Antiquity

Best for Wellbeing/Spas

- Marella Cruises
- Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- Seabourn

PORTS & DESTINATIONS CATEGORIES

Best Destination (Port or Country)

- Barbados – Barbados Tourism Marketing
- Croatia – Croatian National Tourist Board
- Jamaica – The Port Authority of Jamaica
- Greece – Greek National Tourism Organisation
- Iceland – Cruise Iceland
- St Petersburg – Visit St Petersburg

Best Port

- ABP Southampton
- Port of Dover
- Port of Seattle

Best Excursion

- Azamara Club Cruises – Explore Further
- Emerald Waterways – EmeraldACTIVE and EmeraldPLUS
- Intercruises Shoreside & Port Services – Guernsey's Fish, Field and Flavour
- Intercruises Shoreside & Port Services – VIP tour of Kennedy Space Center
- Regent Seven Seas Cruises – Wellness Shore Excursions
- Rocky Mountaineer – Rocky Mountains Excursions



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every single night. Sipping handcrafted
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knows your name. Unwinding in
one of our whirlpools. It's more
to explore, so you'll never
be bored, onboard.

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Itineraries

In the first instalment of our brand new column, we bring you the hottest itinerary news from all around the planet

Epic Antarctica

It's becoming a well-worn phrase, but passengers are truly looking for more experiential travel and new destinations. The question, of course, is how do cruise lines continue to wow and amaze guests? Step forward a 35-day Epic Antarctica voyage, from Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic.

This itinerary – which sails on 27 December 2020 and 26 January 2021 only – will explore along the ice edge of remote Antarctic shores, including the Antarctic Peninsula, Western Antarctica, Ross Sea Ice Shelf and Macquarie.

Prices start at approximately £38,180pp, based on double occupancy in a category 1 cabin on *National Geographic Endurance*, which is scheduled to launch in 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Four wilderness regions and an expedition team
- The white wall that marks the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf
- New Zealand and Australia
- Abundant wildlife to observe

Getaway with Crystal



Crystal Cruises has unveiled a new Crystal Getaways range, described as abbreviated segments of existing longer voyages.

There are nine sailings – in January, February, April and October 2019 – on board *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity*, ranging from six to 16 nights.

Guests will be able to explore South America, Australia, Indonesia, the North American Gulf Coast, the South Pacific and New Zealand and South Africa. Fares will start at £1,288pp.

GETAWAY DEPARTURES

Crystal Symphony

- **5 January:** six nights, New Orleans to Curaçao
- **11 January:** eight nights, Curaçao to Recife
- **11 January:** 10 nights, Curaçao to Salvador da Bahia
- **11 January:** 13 nights, Curaçao to Rio de Janeiro
- **24 January:** eight nights, Rio de Janeiro to Montevideo
- **14 April:** 12 nights, Cairns to Singapore
- **15 October:** 10 nights, Panama City to New Orleans

Crystal Serenity

- **20 January:** 16 nights, Honolulu to Auckland
- **28 February:** 13 nights, Port Louis to Cape Town

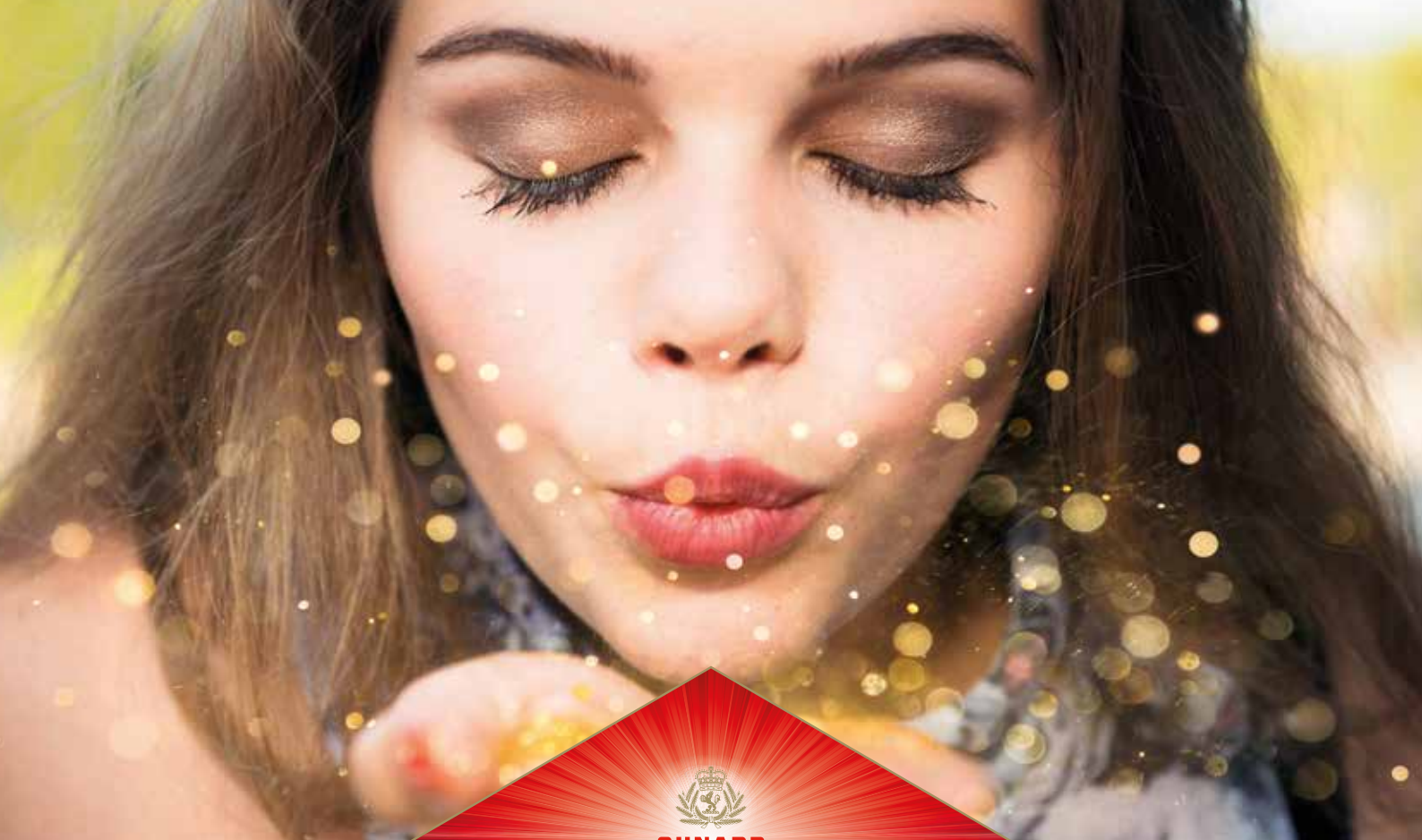
CMV boost for ex-UK sailings

Cruise and Maritime Voyages has added five cruises to its 2019 programme, with departures from London Tilbury.

The new sailings, on *Magellan* and *Columbus*, include a British Isles cruise, visits to the Norwegian fjords, the Baltic, and Southern Norway, and a Canary Islands and Madeira cruise, with calls in Casablanca and Cadiz.

Magellan will sail three new cruises. First, on 3 April, is a 10-night itinerary around the British Isles and along the River Seine to Rouen, from £669pp. She also sails for the Norwegian fjords on a seven-night itinerary (from £499pp), as well as an Easter Hidden Baltic cruise to Scandinavia, Germany, Lithuania and Poland (from £799pp).

Columbus has two departures from London Tilbury. On 3 November, the ship sails a six-night cruise to Southern Norway (from £399pp). On 10 November, *Columbus* heads to the Canaries and Madeira on a 19-night cruise for £999pp.



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Every week we will be giving you the opportunity to earn 2000 points with your Cunard Fare bookings. With 2000 Shine points you could book your own cruise with Cunard*. Plus, with every Cunard Fare booking entered you have the opportunity to join us at the ultimate Shine Surprises Party.

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A voyage with Cunard is unlike any other with indulgent experiences every day. Your customers can book the Cunard Fare to receive complimentary on board spending money and uncover even more. Perhaps a spa treatment, Champagne Afternoon Tea, or some boutique shopping? From additional luxuries on board to wonderful tours ashore.

Register now at shinerewardsclub.com

*Subject to cruise availability please visit shinerewardsclub.com 'rewards' page for full terms and conditions.

Expedition news

FOCUS ON Inuit culture

This thrilling voyage allows Aurora Expeditions passengers to experience ancient customs and cultures



Inuit Arctic & Beyond

From the world's youngest volcano to some of the oldest rocks found anywhere on earth, the scenery on this voyage is the background for passengers to encounter traditional Inuit communities whose strong cultures have remained relatively unchanged for tens of thousands of years. They will also discover the region's history and hear stories about ancient Viking cultures that inhabited the region.

Guests can experience some of the most splendid scenery on the planet in remote South Greenland and the Torngat Mountains, home to polar bears and caribou. They can experience mid-autumn in this wild and remote place, where the dark night sky could very well reward them with a dazzling display of the Northern Lights. Join the ship on its first expedition from Iceland to South Greenland and all the way down Canada's east coast. This is a fine and fitting way to celebrate the end of Aurora's inaugural polar season on its new, purpose-built expedition vessel, the *Greg Mortimer*.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy thrilling Zodiac cruises and keep an eye out for whales and caribou
- Experience the dramatic scenery of the Torngat Mountains National Park
- Visit the remains of an 11th-century Viking settlement at L'Anse Aux Meadows
- Kayak among South Greenland's spectacular fjords and glaciers
- Watch out for the chance to see the Aurora Borealis

When? 23 September – 13 October 2020

Sell it: £10,690 (based on two passengers travelling together)

Itinerary: Departs Reykjavik, Iceland, returns to St John's

Includes: International flights from London to Reykjavik and return from St John's; one-night pre-cruise accommodation; shared transfers with Aurora; cruise package and one night's post-cruise stay

Coral to celebrate 35th birthday with Oz trip

Coral Expeditions will celebrate its 35th anniversary with a 60-day round-trip circumnavigation of Australia.

Departing Darwin on 20 November 2020, passengers will sail on the 120-passenger *Coral Adventurer*, the company's new ship, which joins the fleet in April.

Highlights of the circumnavigation include a private winemakers' dinner and a private jet flight from Cairns for Christmas dinner under the stars at Uluru.

Coral Expeditions was originally founded as Coral Princess Cruises.



Uluru is the venue for Christmas celebrations



Lindblad christens second new build

Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic has christened its second new-build ship.

The 50-cabin *National Geographic Venture* is the sister ship to *National Geographic Quest*.

National Geographic Partners chairman Gary Knell said: "It is a great expedition ship. It's comfortable, nimble and, with massive amounts of glass, our guests will constantly be connected to the outside world. We are delighted with the way she came out."

The ship will be deployed in Baja, the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

GET POLARISED

LET US TAKE YOUR CLIENTS CLOSER
TO THE AUTHENTIC BEAUTY OF THE
SVALBARD ISLANDS.

Your clients can explore the unspoiled landscapes of the Arctic on an extraordinary voyage with all the comforts they love. Aided by a team of world-class experts, our ultra-luxury, all-inclusive ships are modern gems of design, excelling in both fine living and exploration.

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please call 0207 340 0700, visit silversea.com
or email salesuk@silversea.com.**

Future perfect

Iain Powell, head of trade sales at Saga Holidays & Cruise, talks us through the latest trends in the cruise industry, the importance of agents to the company and the arrival of the line's very first new-build ship

What are the things you like best and least about your job?

For me, the opportunity to see something grow is extremely rewarding, whether that's the team, our trade relationships, or our overall sales. I really enjoy having the ability to influence our future and then see the results play out.

How important is the support that Saga provides to help travel agents sell more cruise holidays?

It's vital. As many will know, we only began selling through the trade four years ago, so it is still relatively new to us. That means it is also new to agents and therefore we must work very hard to be recognised and understood in today's crowded market. There are misconceptions around Saga and I'm really enjoying seeing the team break these down to realise amazing results. We will continue to support agents to understand our product better, as well as rewarding them when they make sales. We offer an industry-leading product and we know there is a significant market for our new ships; it's helping agents to demonstrate this to our potential customers that is critical.



What are the current trends in cruise that you have picked up on?

Interestingly, while much of the industry builds larger ships with more novel activities on board, we are seeing significant demand for luxury ex-UK cruising on smaller ships. Of course, we can't deny that, to bring a younger audience to cruise, we need this development in scale and activities, but what about the vast baby boomer generation, who are affluent and want a luxury product with ease of travel? Very few lines are building ships specifically for this market and we think, therefore, there is a real opportunity here.

Where is your favourite port of call on a Saga itinerary?

Although it isn't the most adventurous, I absolutely love New York. *Spirit of Discovery* – our first new build – arriving in July next year, will call there on her Fairytale of New York cruise in December 2019. There is nothing better than sailing into New York and taking in

the landscape, then enjoying everything it has to offer in the festive period.

What is the biggest challenge you face in your professional life?

It was a big change for me when I moved from Carnival UK to Saga, but I see any potential challenges as positive learning opportunities. Saga product is some of the best I've seen and we are all extremely excited about the new ships. One massive challenge my team and I face is overcoming the misconceptions associated with the brand. We will continue to work to change this with new TV and marketing campaigns starting in January 2019, but we need the trade's support in tackling this too. Agents are in the business of making money, while also providing customers with outstanding service; we know we can offer exactly that for any partner working with us.

What is your favourite ship and on-board activity in the Saga fleet?

Although it's probably unfair to say as she isn't yet here, my favourite ship has to be *Spirit of Discovery*. I joined Saga in January 2018 and feel as though I have been a part of it from the very beginning of the build. You can't help but get caught up in the excitement in this business and I love watching the reactions of agents and customers when they see what we are creating. This July is going to be a very exciting time and I am looking forward to watching agents come on board and being wowed by the design. I have been fortunate enough to travel on *Saga Sapphire* a couple of times this year and my favourite activity has to be cooking classes: they are an amazing opportunity to learn some new skills and meet our lovely customers.



Opulent dining at *Sapphire's* exotic East to West restaurant



Saga's first new-build ship, *Spirit of Discovery* arrives this July



The 2019/20 season will be the last for *Sapphire*

Saga recently scooped a handful of accolades at the British Travel Awards – to what do you attribute this success?

To be recognised in so many categories takes a huge amount of effort and input from several people in the business. We have to source the best product, market it correctly to our customers, then offer outstanding service throughout the journey from the point of sale to the moment when the customer returns home. Everyone at Saga is very proud of what we have achieved in 2018 and I am sure we will continue this success in the new year and beyond.

What's new at Saga for 2019?

Well of course we have the arrival of our first new-build ship, *Spirit of Discovery*, in July, which will also include a two-night trade event for around 700 agents. In January and February we will launch a very exciting trade incentive, offering agents more ways to be rewarded for booking Saga. We also hope to run more trade days out than ever before next year, taking agents to exclusive events as a way of thanking them for their continued support. ⚓



MORE

REASONS

- ✓ We guarantee the same prices for our holidays regardless of whether they are online, in a brochure or with a travel agent
- ✓ 96% of customers would book again
- ✓ All holidays backed by our Money back guarantee

INCLUSIONS

- ✓ Optional travel insurance* included on all overseas holidays
- ✓ VIP door-to-door travel service^ included on all long-haul holidays and ocean cruises, and on selected European holidays and river cruises
- ✓ Visas included where needed

REWARDS

- ✓ Industry leading incentives, including the opportunity to attend VIP event days
- ✓ Highly competitive commission rates
- ✓ Amazing FAM trips to destinations such as India, South Africa and Croatia

WIN MORE WITH SAGA THIS NEW YEAR!



MORE

REWARDS

Every holiday or cruise booked from December 27 to February 28, 2019 will be automatically entered into a prize draw to win one of these amazing prizes. Online bookings will be entered twice!

- ✓ 1 of 4 VIP tickets to see the Spice Girls
- ✓ 2 VIP Summer Garden Tickets to Florence & The Machine
- ✓ 3 pairs of VIP tickets to see Rita Ora
- ✓ A Champneys Spa Break for 2 at Henlow
- ✓ Apple iPad 32gb
- ✓ Apple iPhone X 64GB
- ✓ Michael Kors Leather Tote Bag
- ✓ Lulu Guinness Lips Clutch Bag
- ✓ 2 x Sonos Play 1 Speakers
- ✓ GHD Max Hair Straighteners
- ✓ His and her's RayBan Aviator sunglasses
- ✓ Sony PlayStation 4 Pro
- ✓ 4 x Sparkling Afternoon Tea for 2
- ✓ Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Flight with champagne for 2
- ✓ 5* London theatre break and top price seats for 2
- ✓ Weekly food shop at M&S or Waitrose
- ✓ Fit Bit Charge 2
- ✓ 5 x Luxury Hampers
- ✓ 5 x £50 Wagamama vouchers
- ✓ 20 x £10 Starbucks vouchers
- ✓ Coco by Chanel ladies perfume
- ✓ Mac Makeup bundle worth £100
- ✓ Mens or Ladies Nike Trainers with 'Customise' worth £200
- ✓ 1 of 20 Saga Seals
- ✓ A bottle of Hush Heath Sparkling Wine
- ✓ Spaces on Spirit of Discovery's 2-night Trade cruise



Book online at sagaagents.co.uk, call FREE on 0800 074 8021
or contact Agency Sales FREE on 0800 068 8732
Find us on social media   Saga Trade Team

SAGA
keep doing

Sales inspiration

Drinks on Fred

OFFER

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines is offering guests free drinks and tips on more than 150 ocean and river cruises in 2019/20.

The offer applies on all bookings made up to and including 28 February.

Guests can take advantage of the all-inclusive drinks upgrade aboard Fred Olsen's ocean fleet – *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch* – on selected sailings of five to 42 nights.

In addition, guests can enjoy selected house wines, beers, spirits and soft drinks all day and evening, without having to settle a bar bill, plus all gratuities will be paid by the cruise line.

Fred Olsen's new 'Cruise Sale' is also offering guests other booking incentives for the coming seasons:

- Free cashback on 21 ocean cruises in 2019/20, of up to £100 per person.
- A 'three cruises for the price of two' multi-buy deal, where guests can book three cruises from Fred Olsen's ocean and river programmes in 2019/20 and get the lowest-priced sailing for free.
- A number of dedicated solo offers, with no single supplement on selected rooms and cruises in 2019/20.



Drinks upgrades will apply on *Boudicca*

Celebrity boosts 2019 ship visits

Celebrity Cruises has revealed plans to up its ship visit programme.

The line, which officially named *Celebrity Edge* in December in Fort Lauderdale, is planning to host up to approximately 1,000 agents on *Edge* by the end of the year.

Agents will experience the ship during the three-day 'Festival of Edge', held in the UK from 13-15 May and also on overseas trips to Barcelona and Rome.

Edge will be joined by *Celebrity Apex* in 2020, plus two additional sister ships in 2021 and 2022.

Lifestyle vouchers on offer with Paul Gauguin

INCENTIVE

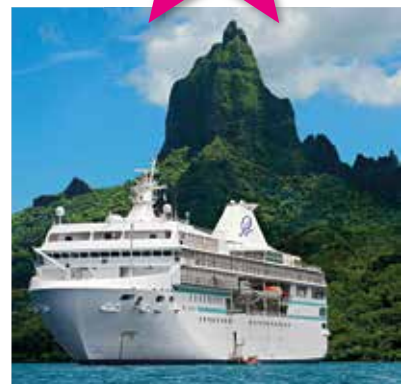
Paul Gauguin is giving agents the chance to start the new year with an added bonus.

Throughout January, agents booking any Paul Gauguin Cruises' 2019 cruise will earn a £100 lifestyle voucher.

There is no limit to the number of bookings, so the more cruises agents book, the more money they will earn. All bookings must be made between 1 and 31 January.

The cruise line operates the 332-guest *Paul Gauguin*, providing departures to Tahiti, French Polynesia and the South Pacific.

For more information on Paul Gauguin and its 2019 itineraries, visit www.paulgauguincruiseline.com



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



Regent develops new online tool

Regent Seven Seas Cruises has unveiled an online tool to help agents sell the company's product.

RegenTrade will provide training material, consisting of the line's training library, as well as resources on the ships and their offerings, in the form of a resource centre.

Each module in the training library features a short video and readable content followed by a few questions to test agents' understanding, while the resource centre brings together sales and marketing tools such as campaign toolkits, images and videos.

Agents can also access deck plans,

virtual tours of the fleet, their suites and public areas, and sample menus.

Marketing Central, launched last year, is also accessible, and provides users with customisable sales tools such as adverts, emails and social media content.

Agents should sign up at www.regenttrade.com.

Win with 'Saga More' campaign

Saga's new agent campaign, running in January and February, highlights three areas to encourage more people to book with the company.

The campaign is tagged as 'more reasons, more inclusions and more rewards', and every holiday or cruise booked until 28 February will be entered into a prize draw, while online bookings will be entered twice.

Example prizes include VIP tickets to see the Spice Girls; VIP Summer Garden Tickets to Florence & The Machine; a Champneys Spa Break for two at Henlow; Apple gadgets; luxury hampers; and a London theatre break for two.



Get on board with CMV

Cruise and Maritime Voyages (CMV) is offering 29 opportunities for agents to visit five ships in 2019, at 11 different UK ports.

The visits will include a short presentation, refreshments, and a five-course lunch with wine, plus the chance to explore the ship.

Visits will be held on *Columbus*, *Magellan*, *Vasco da Gama*, *Marco Polo* and *Astoria*.

CMV's head of trade sales, Lisa Jacobs, said: "CMV remains committed to supporting our productive agents with good commission and helpful support such as these visits.

"We recommend agents book their places early. By offering a variety of alternative venues, we are able to save agents time in travelling."

Agents should contact agents@cruiseandmaritime.com

A class apart

Featuring internationally inspired restaurants, luxurious accommodation, relaxing lounge bars and high-tech fitness facilities, *Celebrity Silhouette* is a class apart on every level

Celebrity *Silhouette* has it all. The ship is a destination in itself with its signature half-acre of real grass on the top deck and upmarket boutique-hotel ambience. There's no doubt that life on board this Solstice class ship is both luxurious and laid-back.

Highlights include a wide array of accommodation options ranging from interior staterooms to the super indulgent and stunning Suite class. What's more, 85 per cent of staterooms have a balcony, ensuring guests can wake up to a new view on each day of their cruise.

Of course, all that relaxation and comfort works up quite an appetite, and yet again this is where *Silhouette* stands out. The ship has 10 innovative restaurants and cafés, from casual or sophisticated, sushi or steak, Italian or

contemporary fusion, inside or outside under the stars. There really is something new to try every day.

While dining at the Lawn Club Grill guests can enjoy the delights of an outdoor BBQ in an open-air setting on the top deck, with views over the ocean, all while sampling one of the largest wine collections at sea: the wine-by-the-glass system in Cellar Masters, or a huge selection of cocktails at the World Class Bar or glass-topped Martini Bar.

Silhouette boasts the largest and most comprehensive Canyon Ranch® Spa experience at sea, including 20 Celebrity signature treatments. And, if that wasn't enough, there is half an acre of real grass lawn on the top deck lined with shaded alcoves – ideal for picnics, games and evening jazz concerts.



CLOSER TO HOME

All of this and more can now be experienced closer to home, as Celebrity Cruises will be basing *Silhouette* in Southampton for eight sailings this year. That means no long flights, lengthy airport delays or tiresome transfers, but there will be extra space luggage – and not forgetting much more time for the most important aspect, the holiday.



Bowls: the laid-back approach



Suites: fit for royalty



On deck: a boutique-hotel ambience

Celebrity Silhouette:
a ship for all ages



On offer is a contrasting selection of cruises that opens up the best of Europe in ways that depart from the expected. It's the kind of holiday that only Celebrity Cruises can deliver.

Fans of a short break will love the seven-night Norwegian Fjords cruises, while those after something a little longer will find all they desire with 10-12 and 14-night sailings. Soak up the unrivalled heritage of Scandinavia, Northern Europe and imperial Russia, or the hot springs of Iceland. Just as inviting are the sun-drenched Canaries, Azores or Western Mediterranean.

Example departures include:

- 10-night cruise to the Canary Islands, departing 3 October
- 14-night cruise to the Western Mediterranean, departing 28 July and 8 September
- 12-night sailing to Iceland and Ireland, departing 7 May
- 14-night cruise to Scandinavia and St Petersburg, with multiple departure dates available



Open-air dining at the Lawn Club Grill

A LOCAL AFFAIR

These fascinating itineraries also provide ample opportunity to take in the local cultures, cuisines and sounds.

In Tenerife, Canary Islands, there's the chance to take in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of La Laguna, where guests can enjoy a guided walking tour capturing must-sees like the Episcopal Palace, Lercaro Palace and the local market. Next is a tasting session of local wines and delicacies at Bodegas Alvaro, followed by a visit to La Casa del Vino wine museum in El Sauzal to sample wines and cheeses.

The story of the world-famous Mariinsky Ballet is brought to life with a behind-the-scenes tour of the Mariinsky Theatre during a visit to the Russian city of St Petersburg. This once-in-a-lifetime experience is designed for a limited number of guests only.

Furthermore, *Silhouette* guests can journey through epic landscapes to Flydalsjuvet Gorge, Norway, followed by Stryn Lake, then the fjord village of Olden. And at Briksdalsbre Mountain Lodge, they board the 'Troll Cars' bound for Briksdal Glacier – part of Europe's largest glacier. ⚓



Did you know? Viking's 2020 river cruises are now on sale from £1,395pp

With the world's largest fleet of innovative river ships – including our multi-award-winning Viking Longships – only Viking can promise you more. More comfort, more quality, more style and more choice of cruises across Europe, Russia and Asia. Relax in spacious, contemporary surroundings. Indulge in fabulous, destination inspired food and thoughtfully selected wines. Explore the cultures and customs of the places you visit on expertly led tours. And discover a unique and exciting new view of the world.

GREAT VIKING VALUE – SO MUCH INCLUDED

- ✓ Return scheduled flights from London and a choice of up to 14 regional airports at no extra cost
- ✓ River-view stateroom
- ✓ All meals on board including wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner
- ✓ Free Wi-Fi on board*
- ✓ An included excursion in almost every port
- ✓ Free tea, coffee and snacks any time on board
- ✓ All port charges, government taxes and overseas transfers
- ✓ Onboard gratuities

2020 RIVER CRUISES

Portugal's River of Gold

10 days, 8 guided tours
Departing March to December 2020
From £1,495pp

Elegant Elbe

10 days, 7 guided tours
Departing March to November 2020
From £1,995pp

Rhine Getaway

8 days, 6 guided tours
Departing March to December 2020
From £1,495pp

Romantic Danube

8 days, 6 guided tours
Departing April to December 2020
From £1,495pp

Châteaux, Rivers & Wine

8 days, 7 guided tours
Departing March to November 2020
From £1,395pp

Waterways of the Tsars

13 days, 10 guided tours
Departing May to October 2020
From £2,795pp

Passage to Eastern Europe

11 days, 7 guided tours
Departing March to November 2020
From £1,945pp

Imperial Jewels of China

15 days, 11 guided tours
Departing March to November 2020
From £2,995pp

Lyon & Provence

8 days, 7 guided tours
Departing March to November 2020
From £1,495pp

Magnificent Mekong

17 days, 16 guided tours
Departing August to December 2020
From £3,195pp

Grand European Tour

15 days, 12 guided tours
Departing April to November 2020
From £2,795pp

Kiev, Black Sea & Bucharest

12 days, 10 guided tours
Departing May to September 2020
From £2,895pp

Call now on 020 8780 7985 or visit vikingcruises.co.uk

Prices correct at time of going to print but are subject to availability and change. From prices are per person and based on two people sharing the lowest grade stateroom available, departing on selected dates in 2020. Prices valid until 31 March 2019. Single supplements apply. Please note on selected cruises a visa may be required and is at the passengers own expense. *Restrictions apply. Gratuities included on board ship only. For more information please visit vikingcruises.co.uk/terms-conditions or call us.



Day in the life

What you do and how you do it – in your own words



**Sue
Poundsbery**

**Travel Consultant,
Beacon Travel**

My alarm goes off at...

Six am – I start my day with a very large mug of Earl Grey in bed before getting ready for my drive to work in Crowborough, East Sussex. This journey can take between 45 minutes and an hour.

My job entails...

Everything relating to the front-of-house operation of an independent travel agency, for instance making sure the brochures and window displays are inviting for our customers. It also involves supporting my manager in any new ideas he may have.

I got my job...

Back in 2014 when I started working at Beacon Travel after being made redundant from my previous role in the industry. I met my current manager on a very memorable fam trip to Germany and we hit it off straight away; he has become a true friend for life.

A typical day involves...

Making sure that all my booking administration is up to date. Chasing any outstanding tickets; dealing with the walk-in customers and their variety of holiday requests.

I have acquired the nickname, 'Queen of the office spreadsheets' as the brochure list is my domain, and all my colleagues know full well never to tamper with it for fear of repercussions!

At lunchtime...

I'm pretty good and mainly prepare my lunch at home to bring with me, but there's no telling what time lunch will be – that is the lot of being a high street travel agency.

The most stressful part of my job is...

Not getting replies from customers when



you have spent a lot of time working on a complex quote for a trip.

I love it when...

I can build up a rapport with customers from the beginning of an enquiry to the final booking stage. It gives me a real buzz when a client returns from their holiday and calls in to the shop to tell me what an amazing time they've had. It's even more rewarding if it was a destination that I'd recommended they try because of my knowledge gained from first-hand experience.



I'll never forget...

How proud I was to be part of Beacon Travel at the Travel Network Group conference in Monaco in 2017, when it was announced that we had won Worldchoice Plus Member of the Year. This is a great achievement for our agency – it has been trading from the same shop for over 50 years.

We bring to the table...

Sound industry knowledge. Even though we're a small agency, between the four of us we know a lot about many different areas of the world. I seem to have become the 'go to' person for cruise advice, I love talking about it in great detail with our new-to-cruise customers.

I'd shake up the industry by...

Trying to make people aware how important high street travel agencies are; not only for the personal service that they can give to holiday-makers, but by helping to keep the local community alive and not seeing lots of empty shops. ⚓

Bold moves

Ben Bouldin, Royal Caribbean's Associate Vice-President and Managing Director for the UK and Ireland, talks about the cruise line's latest offers and My Club Royal's revamp

Tell us more about your latest deal.

This year, Royal Caribbean's One Big Sale offers guests extraordinary savings on initial booking deposits, as well as all-inclusive sailings.

Guests who book a holiday by 4 March 2019 can go all-inclusive, with a Deluxe Drinks Package for the first and second guest and a Refreshments Package for the third and fourth guest – all for a deposit of just £75 per person.

What sailings does the offer apply to?

It applies to select 2019 and 2020 sailings from the UK, Europe, the Caribbean and Asia. Guests can sail on one of Royal Caribbean's 25 spectacular ships, visiting some of the world's most incredible destinations, including our very own private island in the Caribbean, Perfect Day at CocoCay, launching in May.

The UK's favourite cruise ship,



Ben Bouldin

Independence of the Seas, is also included in the offer, sailing fantastic Northern European and Mediterranean itineraries from May to October 2019.

Also, joining her in Southampton in May 2020 is *Anthem of the Seas*, the much-loved Quantum-class ship, which will sail Mediterranean itineraries from the UK for the first time since 2015, where select sailings are also included in the offer.

What's more, selected Middle Eastern sailings in 2020 on board the stunning *Jewel of the Seas* are included in the offer. Her long-awaited return to the region after a two-year break will see guests visit the Arabian Gulf's most stunning destinations.

You also have the Club Rewards programme – how does this scheme support agents?

Agents who are members of our industry-leading Club Rewards programme can benefit from a range of incentives when making bookings during the One Big Sale – £5 when booking an Interior or Ocean View Stateroom, £7.50 when booking a Balcony Stateroom and £10 when booking a Suite. However, the rewards don't stop there, as for every 2019 Caribbean sailing booked, these amounts will be doubled.

How can more agents get involved?

Agents can sign up to Club Rewards at www.myclubroyal.co.uk to take advantage of our range of extraordinary incentives and competitions.

The My Club Royal website also features a fresh, engaging and interactive e-learning platform, designed to equip agents with the knowledge to confidently sell our amazing Royal Caribbean holidays, as well as access to AirWaves, the fly/cruise booking tool, and the latest sales and marketing toolkits.



Spectrum of the Seas: a cruise marvel



Jaw-dropping entertainment comes as standard with Royal

Do you have any plans to upgrade this over the coming months?

A year on from the launch of My Club Royal, we recently revamped the platform with a makeover to make it more cutting edge than ever before.

User experience has been improved throughout the website, with a refreshed look and feel, including the introduction of website banners, simplified icons and new impactful colours and fonts.

Based on feedback from agents, the most used areas of the site, 'Make a Booking' and 'Club Rewards', are now easier to access and navigate, meaning agents will now have a more enjoyable experience when using My Club Royal.

How important is the travel trade to Royal as whole?

Our travel partners are inherent to our business and we seek to work incredibly closely with them to educate them about our product and, of course, through our

award-winning rewards scheme, Club Rewards, we regularly surprise them with incentives and competitions to say thank you for their hard work and support.

Approximately 70 per cent of all Royal Caribbean bookings since September 2014 have been registered by agents through our Club Rewards programme, so they really are, and will continue to be, a significant element of our business.

What are the major trends in the industry at present?

A significant trend is that guests, in particular millennials, are showing an increased preference for travelling more often but for shorter periods of time. This means they are seeking out holidays that really are going to tick all their travel boxes, whether that be thrill, chill, culture or exploration.

We've responded to this trend through some of our itineraries. For example, *Mariner of the Seas* will take the short

getaway experience to a whole new level with four-night weekday and three-night weekend Caribbean itineraries.

We also continue to seek out new ways to attract the attention of new-to-cruise audiences. This can be seen through the innovative ways in which brands are marketing to consumers, the never-before-seen features that are being placed on cruise ships, and the focus on addressing misperceptions about cruise holidays in order to break down barriers to cruise holidays.

It's such an exciting time for the industry, as there is still such a potential for growth. Every year, waves are being made when it comes to enticing more people to enjoy a cruise. ⚓







ONE BIG SALE NOW ON*

ALL + £75_{PP}
INCLUSIVE DEPOSIT

Offer ends 4th March 2019

THIS IS HOW TO HOLIDAY

To find out more, visit **MyClubRoyal**

*Selected sailings in eligible staterooms only. T&Cs apply.



A real

Life really could be a lot worse for river cruise lines. Last year, passenger numbers jumped by 21 per cent and long-term favourites are being joined by new-found delights on the Nile and in Russia, as **Gary Peters** finds out

Some river operators could probably be forgiven for putting their feet up and celebrating a job well done. Well, not a bit of it.

At the CLIA river cruise conference in Paris, the overriding message was not one of congratulatory pats on the back, but rather a call to action. In effect, this is only the start of the river cruise revolution.

The format of the one-day conference – of panels, Q&A sessions and a trade exhibition – gave plenty of scope for examining why Brits, in particular, are taking to the rivers in ever-greater numbers.

To kick things off, CroisiEurope's UK sales director, John Fair, pinpointed the

range of itineraries leading to greater awareness – “passengers can go to places that they couldn't visit on other forms of transport,” he explained, adding that “first-timers” are seeing the potential to try something different.

The line is experiencing this first-hand and has announced it will build a new ship for Africa – the eight-cabin *Zimbabwean Dream*, which will launch in March 2020.

“We are happy to continue our development in Africa,” explained CroisiEurope's e-commerce and sales director, Lucas Schmitter, while Fair added that the line could eventually build up to five or six ships for the region.



A Danube itinerary is the traditional choice

SELLING TIPS

River cruises are great for those who really want to get into the heart of a city

Relaxed, chilled atmosphere on board

Plenty of options available for families

Perfect for guests who want wellness activities included

Excellent excursions that provide memories for a lifetime



Passengers will find luxury comes as standard when taking a river cruise



CroisiEurope takes guests to Zimbabwe

revolution

'Grab the bookings'

Reinforcing the point that education is a fundamental part of future development, sales development manager at Riviera Travel Paul Mellon told *Cruise Trade News* that agents need to "make the most" of the opportunities on the table and "grab those extra bookings".

He added: "For years, people have got their head around ocean cruising, and now that is happening with river."

"There's the classic line of it being an escorted tour on water. That's a big selling point; when you can physically see the destination. I think passengers are switched on to it."

Agents: your mission

One area where growth – in its literal sense – will be limited is with the size of river ships. As ocean vessels continue to expand in size, their river companions have to be "smarter", as "we can only go so big," said APT's managing director, Paul Melinis.

CLIA UK's deputy chair, CEO of Cosmos and Avalon Waterways Giles Hawke, dismissed the notion that everyone wants something bigger and better, instead highlighting the need to develop more efficient fuel systems and improved environmental performance.

"We can get into tiny places [because of size] without having an impact on a

local village – it doesn't overcrowd the place. Size is a bit of red herring," he maintained.

Meanwhile, MD of AmaWaterways Stuart Perl addressed the "lifeblood" of the sector, issuing a challenge to hit a figure of 250,000 passengers in 2019.

"I would like to challenge you. We had 21 per cent growth from 2016-2017, but, for 2019, we can raise the bar to a quarter of a million passengers. Are you up for it? Let's get to it."

Focus on the baby boomers

With the adrenaline pumping, Selina Wank, AmaWaterways' sports scientist >

and leader of its wellness programmes, delved into the topic of wellness – a big talking point in the sector. AmaWaterways is going fleet-wide with its wellness concept, demonstrating that this is a trend that is here to stay.

"Some people choose to cruise with us purely because of our full-on wellness programme. It's for everyone, not just young, active people – my oldest participant was 92 years old," she said. "I want everyone to be able to take part."

Like Wank's point about creating something suitable for all ages, APT's chief commercial officer, Debra Fox, argued that the trick is "to bring new people into river cruise" as the sector really is in the midst of "a revolution at the moment".

She explained that the key is to target the baby boomers. "This is a critical market to connect with and introduce to river cruise. To know how to talk to them, we have to know how they think and what's important to them. For them, it is all about desire and experiences. They are the largest market and the majority of money they spend is on travel.



"We have this wave of people who are right in the sweet spot of getting into river cruising. Start talking to them. They are wealthy people who don't want to settle for less. It's about experiences versus material possessions. Research suggests that in the next seven to eight years, the amount spent on travel for experiences is going to double."

What about the possibility of consolidation, either through river lines

merging, ocean operators coming in, or private equity investors sensing the market opportunity?

"I'd bet money on it," explained Hawke. "I think there will be people coming in and buying river cruise lines and creating super fleets. It's a question of when."

That, perhaps more than anything, demonstrates that the word is definitely spreading: river cruising is no longer languishing in the shallows. ⚓



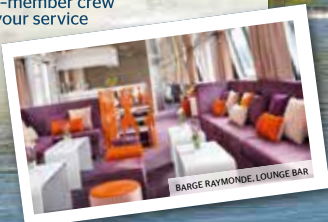
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Winning streak

In this new series of articles, we profile the winners of the 2018 Cruise Star Awards. In this issue it's the turn of John Ferguson, travel consultant at Thorne Travel in Kilwinning, Scotland

JOHN FERGUSON

Thorne Travel



HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT WINNING NOT ONE BUT THREE CRUISE STARS AWARDS?

To be honest, I didn't expect to win any of the awards that I was up for, due to the fierce competition. I was happy just to be a finalist and attend the fantastic event on the day, but to go and win three awards felt like such a great achievement, it left me stunned and totally amazed.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WERE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR WINS?

Definitely my passion for cruising first and foremost; if I wasn't passionate about cruising, I wouldn't be as excited about explaining to customers how fantastic a holiday it is. Experiencing the products and doing the training that is available for cruise agents gives you the passion to sell the brands.

WHAT TIPS CAN YOU PASS ON TO OTHER TRAVEL AGENTS TO HELP THEM BE SUCCESSFUL?

Get the customer the cruise that is going

to fit with what they want to experience on board and in the ports of call. Don't just sell them a cruise because it's a good price and you have an allocation. Don't send a customer on something that you wouldn't go on yourself and, if you get the opportunity, try to experience a cruise.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BEST EXPERIENCE IN SELLING CRUISE HOLIDAYS SO FAR?

There was a family who used to book the same land holiday every year. I suggested to them that they try a cruise for a change, but they said they could never afford to go on one. So I priced up a 10-night, all-inclusive sailing departing from Southampton that was within their budget. As I showed them all the fantastic facilities on board and everything that was included in the package, I started to see the magic and excitement appear in their eyes. Since they booked that cruise two years ago, cruising has become their new family holiday and they have been on three more cruises so far, each to a different destination.

WHAT INNOVATIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FROM CRUISE LINE OPERATORS?

I think the biggest one would be fam trips for agents so they will be able to sell the holiday more confidently. I think they should start offering special rates for travel agents, as this will encourage more of them to book for their own personal holidays and go on more ship visits.

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM DESTINATION?

Because I love cruising so much, I managed to get to my dream destination in May last year and sail from Hong Kong to Japan. This was the trip of a lifetime and I would highly recommend it, as Japan is such a beautiful country. Another dream destination of mine would be the Caribbean – that's next on my list.

WHAT ON-BOARD AMENITY DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST?

I always make a point of visiting every bar and restaurant on the ship, even if it's just to have a look. I also like visiting the spa; I always book in for the final sea day for some relaxation. I enjoy visiting the shops on board and picking up a bargain at sea, and I love lying by the pool with a nice refreshing drink, enjoying the spectacular views. I usually try to fit in a gym visit too, even if it's just a quick walk round. ⚓

“ Don't send a customer on something that you wouldn't go on yourself and, if you get the opportunity, try to experience a cruise ”



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Win at selling Russia

Russia is a destination that is fast growing in popularity. **Hannah Logan**, UK product manager at Fred River Cruises, shares her insights for agents selling this fascinating country

It's important to highlight the history and culture of Russia, as visitors are captivated by this vast country's long, varied and often tumultuous story, alongside its rich culture.

Promotions centred around educational experiences and 'insider insights' available as part of a tour or itinerary will pique the interests of potential clients and help boost enquiries.

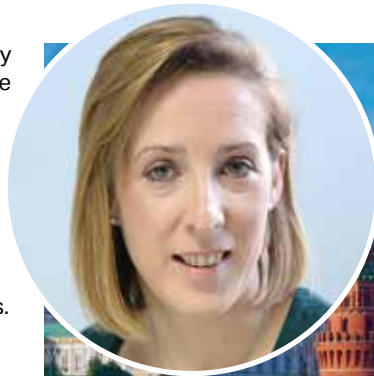
However, one thing to keep in mind is that the Russian tourist season is slightly shorter than for other European destinations, particularly when it comes to river cruising. This means that it is important that agents offer continuous year-round promotion and awareness of Russia as a destination, ensuring that interested travellers remain informed and, most importantly, are ready to book when the time comes.

Travellers to Russia are both discerning and affluent, so avoid focusing on 'cheap deals' or cut-down itineraries with expensive add-ons. Instead, promote high quality, inclusive packages or tailor-made itineraries that enable travellers to gain the full Russian experience and represent fantastic value for money.

LEAVE TIME FOR THE VISA

Traditionally, the process of getting a Russian visa has been a little more arduous than it is today. It is now possible to obtain a visa in three business days – however, 20 days is standard. Agents should advise customers that visas cannot be obtained at the border and should refer them to the Russian National Tourist Board for information on applying. One thing to note is that all applicants from the UK will need to visit the embassy in person to have their fingerprints taken digitally.

Cruises along the River Volga offer travellers an unrivalled combination of comfort, convenience and destination immersion, allowing customers to see a different side of Russia. ⚓



A Volga cruise offers an unrivalled view of Moscow

Sample itineraries and unmissable places to visit

There are a host of itineraries on offer, including, but not limited to:

Volga Dream from Fred Olsen River Cruises combines hotel city stays in St Petersburg and Moscow with stops at authentically historic cities, towns and villages, including the Golden Ring city of Yaroslavl. New for 2019 is a sailing from Moscow to Volgograd, which visits the lower Volga River

Vodohod's St Petersburg to Moscow sailing, on *Mstislav Rostropovich*, departing 11 May, takes in sights such as the Church of Our Saviour on the Spilled Blood, and St Isaac's Cathedral in St Petersburg, as well as the grounds of the Kremlin in the capital city

Emerald Waterways has an Imperial Charms of Russia departure, on *MS Rossia*, leaving Moscow and visiting some unknown gems such as Yaroslavl, which was founded in the 11th century, and the small island of Kizhi, which is home to the Open Air Museum of Architecture, housing a collection of restored 18th-century Russian wooden buildings

Saint Basil's Cathedral – one of Russia's most recognisable buildings



“In conversation with... Hurtigruten

There's plenty going on at Hurtigruten – new ships, headline-worthy eco initiatives and a foray into Alaska. It's a move back towards the cruising industry, a reconnecting of ties and a drive to sell its “uniqueness”, as **Gary Peters** finds out

The conversation is just a few minutes old when the words “we are going to do it differently” are uttered for the first, but not last, time; for they represent the key tenet of Hurtigruten's plans – not purely in words but also in actions.

The proof of the pudding, of course, will be in the eating. Nevertheless, it's hard not to be impressed with the aspiration, which is headlined by not one or two, but by three new hybrid electrically powered expedition ships, the first of which – *MS Roald Amundsen* – launches in May, followed by *MS Fridtjof Nansen* in 2020, and a third, still unnamed, sister, in 2021.

These ships will reduce fuel consumption by approximately 20 per cent and will be capable of sailing with only electric propulsion for up to 30 minutes.

Anthony Daniels, the company's UK general manager, is the man charged with selling this ambition to the UK market, as the company begins to “transition to more of a cruise line than ever before”.

“I think we epitomise the way the industry is changing,” he explains. “People want more and everyone is realising that – everyone is trying to find ways to differentiate their brand.

“I've been here [at Hurtigruten] for three years and we did partly distance ourselves from cruise media and events, because it pigeonholed us in cruise all the time. We had to take some brave decisions at that time.

“However, now we are moving back to re-embrace cruise, purely because there is more potential with our explorer destinations. Now we can start pushing a bit more than we have before.”

A HYBRID FUTURE

This push owes much to the *MS Roald Amundsen* and Hurtigruten's Norway-based operations, as it borrows from the strong environmental consciousness of local authorities and government.

The question on everyone's lips – at least this writer's – is, why hybrid? As Anthony Daniels explains to me, the concept is nothing new. “It has been talked about [for a while]. In Norway... it is second nature to them.

“If we're going to these untouched destinations, we've got to do it the right way. Hybrid is a technology that has worked well in cars and other industries. We've worked with Rolls-Royce on the ships, so it's a no-brainer, really.”

Eco-consciousness is becoming even more crucial



What about the cost, for both cruise line and passenger? “We took the decision knowing it will cost us more money and, no, we're not passing that cost on to the consumer,” Daniels affirms. “There may be a small increase with fares, as there often is, but not to cover the cost of the hybrid and the fuel. When *Amundsen* launches, she's the first step, and *Nansen* will be an evolution of that.”

Naturally, the logical conclusion is that hybrid is here to stay with any additional future new-builds and, although Daniels cannot “100 per cent” confirm that will be the case, he agrees he'd be “very surprised if we go for any method other than hybrid, unless the next evolution is better”.

Speaking of alternative methods, dead fish and organic waste may not traditionally be the first things that come to mind when considering how to power ships. It's known as liquefied biogas



If we're going to these untouched destinations, we've got to do it the right way. Hybrid is a technology that has worked well in cars and other industries” ANTHONY DANIELS



(LBG), and Hurtigruten believes that by 2021 at least six ships in its 17-strong fleet could be powered by a mixture of LBG, LNG and large battery packs.

"We're learning from other industries and seeing how we can integrate this into our ships," adds Daniels. "There will be an investment to modify the ships [so they can use dead fish and waste]. What a fantastic opportunity."

AN ALASKAN ODYSSEY

Not content with just environmental developments, Hurtigruten will also sail to Alaska for the very first time in its 2020/2021 season, on *Roald Amundsen*. Itineraries ranging from 13 to 17 nights are on sale now.

In essence, the move has been made to keep up with demand, says Daniels, but – and this, he adds, is the central point – "Alaska is a massive destination for



We will find different areas that the bigger ships cannot access and will create more immersive experiences"

cruising, but we are going to do it differently," he says. "Of course, you'll see some of the key ports, but it's with the places between those ports that we start to win. We will find different areas that the bigger ships cannot access and will create more immersive experiences."

When pressed to cite specific examples, Daniels states that these are still in development and that "as always with us, it's about what happens when you get off the ship".

He adds: "With the 2020/21 season, we are including gratuities on all of our explorer programmes, drinks with lunch and dinner, and soft drinks throughout the day, as well as an activity on each day

on all explorer trips. That will be the next level for us."

What is crucial is upping support for agents as they seek to sell the new ships and itineraries. On this point, Daniels is upbeat about the relationship with the UK trade, labelling it as "excellent".

The aim now is to get more agents on board for fam trips – "we know that as soon as we get the brand in front of agents, their eyes light up" – and releasing an agent portal, which should arrive some time this year.

It all adds up to a schedule for the company so packed that there's barely time for Daniels and his colleagues to catch their collective breath. ⚓

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The Grill is one of the ship's two speciality restaurants...



...while Fusion offers a more intimate experience



Chic relaxation goes to the next level in the Atrium

CMV COLUMBUS

We were on board Cruise and Maritime Voyages' flagship *Columbus* as it headed from London Tilbury on a mini-cruise to Amsterdam, Hamburg and Antwerp. Having joined the CMV fleet in 2017, *Columbus* has undergone a significant facelift and has emerged as a cruise ship tailor-made for a UK-based audience. With sailings out of London Tilbury and Amsterdam in 2019, this is the perfect ship for customers seeking a traditional British cruise experience.



This adults-only ship has spacious double suites with balconies



Built along traditional lines, *Columbus* has had a complete refurbishment



The Jade Wellness Centre raises the ship's spa game

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In focus

SOUTHAMPTON



The port of Southampton has partnered with P&O Cruises to accommodate the growing demand for larger ships in a project destined to strengthen its position as Northern Europe's leading cruise port

The demand for cruise is on the rise, creating an interest in building larger cruise ships. The port of Southampton is paving the way for the future of cruise with a £12 million partnership investment with P&O Cruises that will soon enable the British port to accommodate larger ships. This investment to support further growth in the cruise sector is already underway, with work having begun last October.

The Ocean Terminal is being upgraded to accommodate the growing demand from cruise lines for ever larger ships to call at Southampton. This work, which will take just over a year to complete, is expected to

further strengthen the port's position as Northern Europe's leading cruise port.

The project will enable P&O's newest flagship vessel to home port in Southampton from spring 2020. *Iona* will be the next generation of P&O cruises ships and is the first British cruise ship to be powered by LNG (liquefied natural gas), making it a pioneer in the industry. *Iona* is currently being built at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg and will be launched next May.

Iona is the first of two new vessels of this class for P&O Cruises, with the next ship on order to be delivered in 2022. The additional work to accommodate these new vessels, each of them with a capacity of 5,200 guests, >

The south coast port accommodates vessels of all sizes and classes

WHAT'S ON OFFER

Southampton provides four dedicated cruise terminals (Ocean Cruise, QEII, City Cruise and Mayflower Cruise), which offer bespoke services to meet the specific needs of the largest, as well as some of the smallest, cruise ships.

As the owner of four world-class cruise terminals, the Port of Southampton describes itself as having “a wealth of experience and expertise in providing first-rate services for cruise operators”. All four of the dedicated cruise terminals have undergone multi-million-pound refurbishments that enable the port to cater to some of the world's largest and most technologically advanced ships.

There are cafés and bars located within each of the terminals, as well as secure baggage handling facilities and reliable check-in technology to ensure a smooth and efficient service for all cruise passengers using the port.

Short and long-stay car parks are available adjacent to each terminal, along with a dedicated waiting area for Hackney cabs, pre-ordered taxis and private pick-ups and drop-offs. There is also a demarcated area for coaches, located immediately outside each terminal. More details can be found at www.abparking.co.uk.

will increase passenger capacity at the terminal by 50 per cent.

Along with infrastructure improvements to the quayside and within the terminal itself, the existing 2,000 roof-mounted solar panel installation will also be expanded, further improving the port's environmental credentials.

“Cruise is a strong and growing industry. The ships that call at Southampton are increasing in size and we are investing significantly to accommodate future growth in the industry and to maintain our position as Northern Europe's leading cruise port,” says ABP Southampton director Alastair Welch.

He adds: “We continually invest in the port to adapt and develop to meet our customers' growing needs, and we are committed to ensuring that this growth happens in the most environmentally sustainable way. We are very supportive of cruise lines embracing LNG power for their vessels.” ⚓

Large ships such as P&O's *Iona* will find a berth at Southampton



FAST FACTS

The Port of Southampton is the UK's number one port for cruise, as well as being the cruise capital of Northern Europe.

It currently welcomes more than two million passengers a year on more than 500 cruise calls.

Southampton has consistently been voted the best UK departure port since 2010.

From the smallest expedition vessel to the largest cruise ships in the world, a whole host of cruise lines call at Southampton.

In 2018, 18 cruise lines called at Southampton (nine brands and 45 vessels).

Carnival UK brands P&O and Cunard home port in Southampton, while a number of lines also home port ships seasonally, including Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Saga and Fred Olsen.

The Port of Southampton regularly welcomes the newest and largest vessels, and work is currently under way to see how the port can continue to meet the needs of the cruise lines as they introduce increasingly larger and more complex ships.

Southampton benefits from excellent land, air and sea transport connections; by sea it is ideally positioned for cruises north to the Baltic and Norway and south to the Mediterranean, as well as for transatlantic cruises and sailings around the UK. By air, Southampton is served by the global airport hubs of Heathrow and Gatwick, as well as regionally by Southampton and Bournemouth airports. By land, the city is centrally located on the south coast of England, with mainline railway services and motorways just a short distance away.



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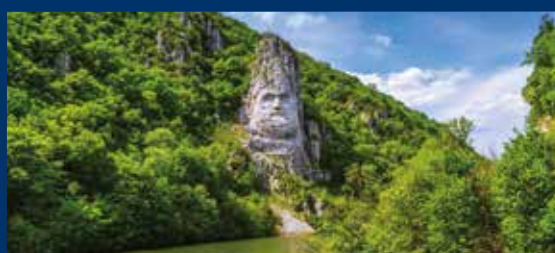
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The far horizons

When clients are looking for something different, it may be an opportune moment to broaden their horizons and suggest an exotic river cruise, as **Jeannine Williamson** discovers



Guests will share the Brahmaputra with local villagers. Right: monks on Majuli island make a joyful noise



Mahabaahu itself offers one of many photo ops on a Brahmaputra cruise



BRAHMAPUTRA SELLING TIPS

- 1** Spacious colonial-style vessel designed to cope with the Brahmaputra's currents
- 2** Fresh, regional food that is very different from Indian restaurants in western regions
- 3** Shore tours in private cars – each accompanied by a crew member – rather than a minibus
- 4** Free daily yoga classes suitable for all levels
- 5** Option for an extension to take in the famous Golden Triangle and the Taj Mahal

Photos: Mayuresh Hendre

River cruising is normally associated with Europe, but once your clients have sailed on the more traditional routes, there are some exciting waterways further afield waiting to be explored. CLIA UK & Ireland's annual *River Cruise Review* revealed that in 2017 India experienced the highest percentage passenger increase in far-flung itineraries, with a 27.5 per cent growth in intrepid travellers heading for the Ganges and Brahmaputra. Similarly, other up-and-coming exotic destinations include the Amazon.

This month we take a close-up look at the Brahmaputra and Amazon so you can offer your customers the thrilling trip of a lifetime.

BRAHMAPUTRA

The world's fastest flowing river rises in the Himalayas and courses 2,391 miles to the Bay of Bengal, running the entire length of the north-eastern Indian state of Assam on the way. Rising the height of a three-storey building during the monsoon season, the Brahmaputra is a mighty waterway that seems to shape every feature of the surrounding landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS

With few hotel boats sailing on the Brahmaputra, India specialist Far Horizon Tours offers a pioneering itinerary that takes in remote areas, including many that would otherwise be inaccessible, on its sturdy and comfortable vessel, the 46-passenger *Mahabaahu*. Knowledgeable guides are assigned to stay with passengers for the duration, accompanying them on diverse trips to temples, tea plantations and isolated villages

where visitors are a rarity and attract curious yet always polite attention.

Standout excursions include a trip to Majuli, the world's largest river island, to see joyful monks worship through song and dance. There are exhilarating waterborne safari trips on the *Mahabaahu*'s skiffs, and an unforgettable expedition to Kaziranga National Park, home to India's 'big five'; the one-horned rhinoceros, Asian elephant, wild water buffalo, Indian bison and the magnificent Royal Bengal tiger, which lucky visitors may stand a chance of spotting.

ASK THE EXPERT

"It is the only river cruise apart from the Zambezi that offers three safaris by boats, jeeps and elephants inside Kaziranga, which is known as the Serengeti of India," says Sanjay Basu, managing director of Far Horizon Tours. "The naturalist makes each day like being in a bird and wildlife paradise – visits to silk-weaving villages and learning about the birth of English breakfast tea are all part of being in Assam. Temple visits provide great cultural and spiritual experiences, and barbecues and drinks on the silver sands of deserted islands are very special. The on-board facilities, including a heated swimming pool, make it a very comfortable ship and, with 55 per cent of deck space devoted to public areas, it never feels crowded."

WHO WOULD IT SUIT?

This is for open-minded customers looking for an authentic and insightful experience that will take them into the heart of rural life. Although *Mahabaahu* has a lift, passengers need to be comfortable walking reasonable distances, sometimes on uneven ground.

SELL IT

FRED RIVER CRUISES

offers the nine-night Kolkata & the Mighty Brahmaputra River itinerary departing 28 March 2019 from £2,799pp, including a two-night pre-cruise B&B stay in Kolkata, a full-board seven-night cruise and return flights from London. 0800 021 3189 fredrivercruises.co.uk/far-horizons

DID YOU KNOW

The *Mahabaahu* has an on-board tailor who makes tops, dresses and other clothing from lengths of silk and fabric bought in villages or from the ship's own stock. Prices are very reasonable and garments are often ready the next day.

Skiff excursions take passengers even deeper into the rain forest



AMAZON SELLING TIPS

- 1**
A truly off-the-beaten-track experience
- 2**
Small-ship cruising that gives something back to the local communities
- 3**
Passengers enjoy Amazonian dishes made from local produce
- 4**
Swimming in the river with wild dolphins is a not-to-be-missed holiday experience
- 5**
Add an extended pre or post-cruise stay in the culture-rich and foodie Peruvian capital, Lima

AMAZON

Rising in Peru, South America's largest river, and the second-longest in the world, flows for 4,345 miles: more than 60 per cent of Peruvian territory is covered by the Amazon rainforest, greater than any other country. Iquitos, less than a two-hour flight from Lima, is the gateway for cruises on the Amazon.

HIGHLIGHTS

Waking up to the sound of the dense rainforest coming to life and sailing deep into creeks with sharp-eyed naturalists are key experiences that make an Amazon river cruise aboard the *Amatista* totally unique. Early morning and evening skiff excursions make the most of rich bird and wildlife spotting opportunities, and passengers might see chattering monkeys, beautiful pink river dolphins, sloths, bats, caiman, iguanas and more in the heart of the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve.

Back on dry land, meetings with indigenous villagers, who depend on the river for fish and the rainforest for food, provide a real insight into the people who make their homes on the river banks. Most notable is a visit to a shaman, or spiritual healer, who uses plants to cure all manner of ailments and carry out rituals.

ASK THE EXPERT

"The Amazon continues to be incredibly popular among wildlife lovers and those looking to get off-grid to immerse themselves in the heart of



Amatista offers a unique off-grid experience

SELL IT

G ADVENTURES offers a six-night Amazon Riverboat Adventure itinerary departing 8 April 2019 from £1,279pp, including two nights' B&B in Lima, a four-night full-board cruise, internal flights and transfers. 0344 272 2040

DID YOU KNOW

G Adventures' solo travellers don't pay a supplement if they share a twin-bed cabin with a same-sex roommate. For singles who want their own space, the My Own Room option enables them to book a private cabin for an additional fee.

the jungle," says Sarah Schlederer, marine sales specialist at G Adventures. "Aboard the 30-passenger *Amatista*, travellers can get up close to exotic species such as toucans, sloths and pink dolphins, which are seen on daily skiff excursions led by experienced guides."

She continues: "Skiffs enable us to take guests deeper into the jungle down small tributaries where wildlife is much more diverse. Each journey includes visits to villages where travellers learn about local life from food to handicrafts, and can enjoy a meal on the floor, jungle-style, with an indigenous family."

WHO WOULD IT SUIT?

This is for well-travelled, adventurous clients of all ages who support responsible tourism and don't mind rain (ponchos and waterproof boots are provided). A reasonable degree of fitness is needed for getting on and off the boat on to muddy banks and for boarding skiffs. ⚓

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MS Roald Amundsen

Later this year Hurtigruten will add a brand new ship to its fleet, the *MS Roald Amundsen*. The state-of-the-art vessel features new and environmentally sustainable hybrid technology that will reduce fuel consumption and show the world that hybrid propulsion on large ships is possible.

In 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen achieved the incredible, becoming the first man to cross Antarctica and reach the South Pole. Hurtigruten's new ship is proud to bear his name as a symbol for pioneering polar exploration.

The future of shipping will be silent and emission free, and *MS Roald Amundsen* will lead the way towards an even more sustainable way of travelling.

YOUNG EXPLORERS' PROGRAMME

Young Explorer is a complimentary, year-round programme that will be run on selected Hurtigruten ships and will be specially geared towards curious and active youngsters aged between 7 and 13.



EDUTAINMENT AREA

Packed with state-of-the-art technology and high tech gadgets, the immersive edutainment area will be the place guests and staff/crew meet, mingle and find a deeper understanding of the areas they explore. The flexible venue will feature lecture spaces, a small library, and speciality areas for workshops in photography, biology and more.



ARTWORK

When the world's first hybrid-powered expedition ship embarks on her maiden voyage, every piece of art on board will be handpicked by HM Queen Sonja of Norway's art foundation – the Queen Sonja Print Award.





RESTAURANTS

MS Roald Amundsen will have three restaurants inspired by Nordic and Norwegian heritage: Aune Main Dining, named after a polar expedition supplier; Tinus Aune Fredheim – an informal and social meeting place – named after a hunting station on Svalbard, Lindstrøm; and a restaurant named after Adolf Lindstrøm, chef of polar heroes.



OBSERVATION DECK

One of the most eye-catching exterior design features of the ship will be the two-level indoor/outdoor Observation Deck wrapped around the top of the ship's raked bow. In a vast area behind it will be the core of the on-board experience: the Amundsen Science Centre.

FAST FACTS

2019

year built

**Kleven
Yards**

shipyard

530

passenger
capacity

20,889

gross tonnage

140

length

15 knots

speed



CABINS

The stunning scenery will be reflected in a rich and comfortable interior design. Scandinavian materials from nature, such as granite, oak, birch and wool, will be used to create relaxed and stylish cabins and public areas. All cabins are outside, 50 per cent will have private balconies, and aft suites will feature private outdoor Jacuzzis with spectacular views.

Going it alone

Passengers who embark on an ocean cruise as a single traveller certainly won't be lonely, as **Jeannine Williamson** finds out

Cruising is one of the best holidays for lone travellers, whether they are single or have a non-cruising partner. An increasing number of lines offer solo cabins, no longer the size of a broom cupboard, while others waive or reduce single supplements and organise special get-togethers for those on their own.

There are plenty of welcoming lines for clients looking to set sail by themselves, and agents can sell with confidence knowing their customers are guaranteed to be well looked after and will meet plenty of like-minded fellow passengers along the way.

SAGA

What they do Saga has an enviable reputation with single travellers, who make up around one fifth of passengers, and it's easy to see why. The line provides a high ratio of single staterooms and a number of them have balconies – a rarity on many lines.

The two current vessels, *Saga Pearl II* and *Saga Sapphire*, have 57 and 44 single cabins respectively. Saga's pair of brand new ships, *Spirit of Discovery* and *Spirit of Adventure*, being launched this July and in 2020 respectively, will each have an unprecedented 109 single cabins – and

each of them will have its own balcony.

Saga organises cocktail parties and get-togethers before each port of call for those who want to go ashore in company, and fares include wine with lunch and dinner and a complimentary door-to-door chauffeur transfer service.

Sell it Seven-night Norway Rocks round-trip Dover itinerary on *Spirit of Discovery*, from £1,592pp departing 29 September 2019. Tel: 0800 074 8021; sagaagents.co.uk.

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

What they do In 2010 Norwegian Cruise Line transformed solo cruise travel by becoming the first company to introduce cabins and public areas specifically with single cruisers in mind. These award-winning Studio Staterooms have full-size beds and boast cool décor with multi-coloured lighting, plus a cleverly designed bathroom to maximise space.

Studio passengers have exclusive use of the private Studio Lounge and social area where they'll find free tea, coffee and snacks, as well as a nightly happy hour, singles meet-ups and a whiteboard for posting notes to fellow travellers. Other perks include room service and, on some cruises, crew members host bar crawls around the ship.

For solo cruisers who want to book a regular stateroom, NCL offers a reduced single supplement on selected sailings.

Sell it Seven-night Western Mediterranean round-trip cruise from Barcelona on *Norwegian Epic*, from £1,618pp departing 9 June 2019. Tel 02381 245030; agents-uk.ncl.eu.

MARELLA CRUISES

What they do Brit-friendly Marella Cruises, formerly Thomson, offers special



Singles make up about a fifth of passengers on Saga trips



With Marella, tips for staff are inclusive



Clever design on Norwegian maximises space for solos

deals for solo travellers on selected cruises to destinations including the Mediterranean and Caribbean. All the ships have outside and inside single cabins and *Marella Explorer 2*, joining the fleet this summer, will be adults-only.

On all sailings a social host is on hand to arrange get-togethers for solo travellers, such as coffee mornings and dinners. And if any passengers are worried about dining alone, the ship's maitre d' will try to ensure they are seated with other single guests.

Marella offers good value for money, as all tips and service charges are included, plus *Marella Explorer*, *Discovery* and *Discovery 2* offer all-inclusive drinks and free dining at speciality restaurants. From this summer *Marella Dream* and *Celebration* will also become all-inclusive.

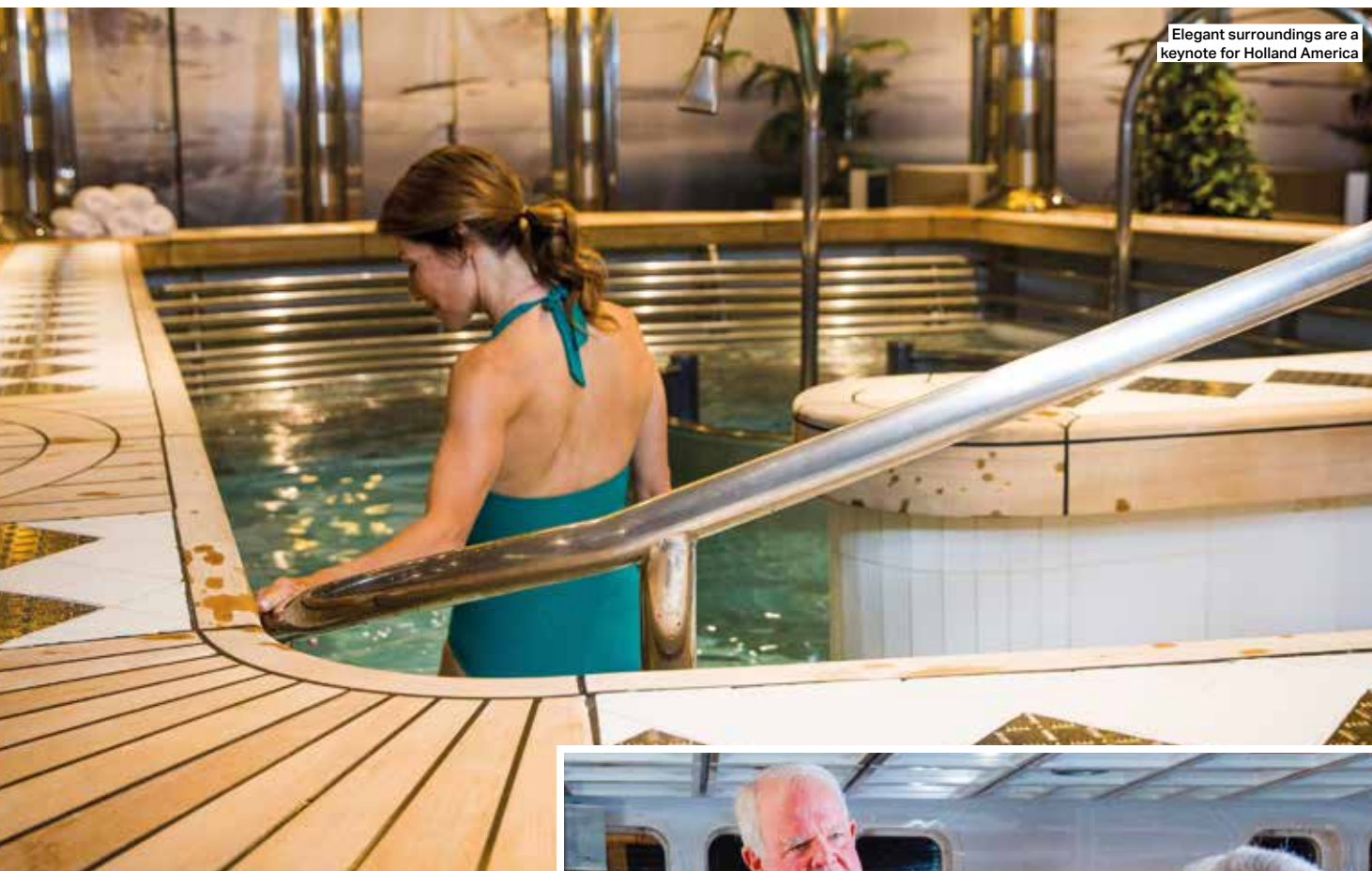
Sell it Seven-night Treasures of the Mediterranean round-trip Palma de Mallorca cruise on *Marella Dream* from £1,480pp departing 13 August 2019. Tel: 0203 636 1931; tui.co.uk.

FRED OLSEN CRUISE LINES

What they do Fred Olsen's fleet of four smaller-sized ships – *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch* – provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, particularly for first-time solo cruisers. This tried-and-tested formula means that on average around 13 per cent of passengers are travelling alone.

The line offers one of the largest numbers of single cabins in the industry, with 190 across the fleet, including 11 suites and a choice of inside and outside accommodation. Solo travellers are seated together in the restaurant and meet-ups enable them to go ashore with companions. There are dance partners for single ladies and activities such as bridge, and arts and craft classes that can be enjoyed with other passengers, or individually if they prefer.

There are also special deals, including no single supplements and 'twin for solo' occupancy rates on selected sailings. ➤



Elegant surroundings are a keynote for Holland America

Sell it 11-night Spain, Portugal and Morocco round-trip Liverpool itinerary on *Black Watch*, from £1,499 departing 26 November 2019. Tel: 0800 0355 141; fredolsencruises.com.

HOLLAND AMERICA LINE

What they do Each of Holland America's elegant ships hosts a party for singles to meet early on in their cruise, followed by cocktail receptions and other events. On each sailing there are more than 40 inclusive activities where passengers can meet fellow solo travellers and other guests, including exercise and dance classes, wine tasting and cookery demonstrations, trivia contests and sports challenges.

On most cruises of 30 days or longer, there are social hosts to welcome single women to dinner and dancing. By advance request, special effort will be made to seat singles with their counterparts at dinner.

Launched last month, *Nieuw Statendam*, the sister ship to *Koningsdam* and the second of HAL's Pinnacle-class ships, has 12 single cabins.

Sell it Six-night Authentic Cuba round-trip Fort Lauderdale sailing on *Veendam* from £929pp, departing 23 October 2019. Tel: 0344 338 8605; gohal.co.uk.



Singles make up 23 per cent of guests at Voyages to Antiquity

VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY

What they do The line's *Aegean Odyssey* carries an average of just 350 passengers per cruise, creating an ideal environment for meeting new people. This is reflected in an impressive seven per cent year-on-year increase in solo passengers, and in 2018 some 23 per cent of guests were single travellers.

There are solo drinks parties on every sailing, along with hosted dinners for solos, and during shore excursions participants stay in the same assigned group for the duration of the cruise, which means that friendships are quickly formed.

Dedicated single cabins have low supplements and are available in almost all categories, from inside to deluxe balcony. In 2017 the number of these cabins was increased from 29 to 38. However, when these are full, other staterooms are offered with similarly reduced supplements, something that accounts for the high number of single passengers choosing the line.

Sell it 15-night Iceland, Faroes & Shetlands London Tilbury round-trip cruise from £3,995pp, departing 30 July 2019. Tel: 01865 567 120; voyagesantoantiquity.com. ⚓

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Exeter	Nottingham
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Agent feedback from Cruise challenges

"The sponsors' talks were very informative. The fun element, makes the Cruise Challenge completely different to any other event I have been to"

"I thought it was absolutely brilliant. Much better than other events I have been to. Well DONE!"

cruise
TRADE NEWS



Sumptuous sailing

Deluxe and lavish – take a tour of the most upmarket cruise options available

Luxury is a word often synonymous with cruising: beautifully fitted-out vessels with splendidly appointed accommodation and welcoming yet discreet staff who know your passengers by name and are only too happy to cater to their every whim.

Luxury cruise lines include Seabourn, whose *Encore* ship has a passenger-crew ratio of 1:0.78 (one of the key benchmarks of the ultra-premium market), and offers guests a range of upscale amenities. These include a fitness centre and spa, an enrichment programme known as Seabourn Conversations, plus The Grill featuring dishes by renowned American chef and restaurateur Thomas Keller.

Silversea is another operator known for its opulent approach to cruising: *Silver Muse* joined the fleet in 2017 and accommodates 596 guests. The Monaco-headquartered line describes the vessel as “enhancing the small-ship intimacy and spacious all-suite accommodation that are the hallmarks of the Silversea experience”. All the suites on board feature ocean views, and many come with a private teak veranda. Cuisine is inspired by Relais & Château, and butler service is provided for every guest.

Regent Seven Seas' *Explorer*, meanwhile, comes with the tagline “exceeding the loftiest expectation” and offers passengers cooking classes, a cosy library, fine dining and a range of card games to be enjoyed in palatial comfort. Once on shore, guests can take part in an array of gourmet tours that include wine-tasting in Provence, paella-making in Valencia and a

A visit to Dubai offers a chance to see the world's tallest building



Crystal Esprit's Patio Café puts luxury first

guided tour of the seaside market in Nice.

For our comparison this month we've selected a cruise line that regularly tops the listings of ultra-premium operators: Crystal Cruises. Its seven-night itinerary on board the 62-guest *Crystal Esprit* is the last word in luxury. During this voyage guests can witness soaring architectural marvels in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, visit the Arabian Wildlife Park on Sir Bani Yas island and enjoy a Bedouin-style dinner in the Qatari desert. ⚓

	ITINERARY	DESTINATIONS VISITED	ENTERTAINMENT	ACCOMMODATION	MEALS	PRICE
LUXURY CRUISE	Emirates Yacht Adventure	Dubai, Sir Bani Yas island, Manama (Bahrain), Doha (Qatar), Abu Dhabi, Dubai	Enrichment programme including activities such as yoga and photography, plus nightly music sessions with a pianist and singer	Yacht suite with butler service	All food and drink on board is included in the price	Seven nights from £3,643 per person*
VS						
LUXURY LAND HOLIDAY	Dubai	Dubai (desert and city tours available at extra cost)	None specified	Five-star deluxe hotel	Only breakfast is included	Seven nights from £5,501 per person

*Includes use of on-board water sports equipment, shore excursions, gratuities and overseas transfers

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- Seribu Moko Museum
- Banda Archipelago Diving & Snorkelling
- Coral Triangle Marine Diversity
- Karst Islands
- Aboriginal Culture & Rainforests

BALI (BENOA), INDONESIA › Sumbawa Island, Indonesia › Komodo National Park, Indonesia › Lantutuka, Indonesia › Kalabahi, Indonesia › Lucipara, Indonesia › Banda Neira, Indonesia › Raja Ampat Islands Expedition Stops, West Papua, Indonesia › Cruising the Arafura Sea › Thursday Island, Australia › Cape York, Australia › Great Barrier Reef, Australia › Lizard Island, Australia › Ribbon Reef, Australia › **CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA**

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Images shown of Crystal Endeavor at this time are artists' conceptual renderings and are subject to change.

Destination down under



Whether it's *Lord of the Rings* landscapes, marine fauna-filled waters, balmy weather or the chance to meet a koala bear, an Australia and New Zealand cruise offers incredible adventure and variety. **Heidi Fuller-Love** is your guide

Australia and New Zealand may both be washed by the same warm Pacific waters but all resemblance ends there – and that's just what makes a cruise to these two island nations so exciting.

With its combination of beach and bush, Australia delivers a surprising blend of off-the-beaten track adventures and sophisticated city experiences. "Highlights are Melbourne, a hip and creative city, while the port of Eden offers bushwalks, oysters and kangaroos, and in Burnie, Tasmania, guests are hunting for truffles, sampling local whisky and filling up on cheese," says senior vice-president and MD for EMEA at Oceania Cruises Bernard Carter.

In its 2018 travel trend report, ABTA describes New Zealand as "an alluring mix of Polynesia and Europe, with incredibly diverse scenery, stunning coastlines, delicious wine and food, and intensely proud but welcoming inhabitants". Sales and marketing director for Fred Olsen

Cruise Lines Justin Stanton agrees, adding: "A survey of 1,500 high-end UK travellers at the Condé Nast Traveller luxury travel fair saw New Zealand top the list of Brits' dream destinations for the coming year. This coincides with 2019 marking the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's arrival there."

Popular ports of call in New Zealand, with its two islands separated by the Cook Strait, include the North Island's capital, Wellington, famed for its glorious waterfront and the South Island's Dunedin, renowned for its stunning Victorian architecture.

Most of the major lines that have sailings out of Australia, including Holland America, Cunard and Seabourn, will have New Zealand on itineraries for 2019 and 2020, and ships generally leave from Sydney or Auckland in the summer months. October to April are the busiest months for Southern Hemisphere cruises, although Australian cruise lines operate throughout the year: Australia

Above: Sydney – world famous for architecture and culture



SELLING TIPS

ADD ATTRACTIONS

"Agents should 'upsell' these longer cruises - with the opportunity to promote a land-based pre- or post-cruise extension to the holiday - thereby adding extra value to the booking and enhancing their commission," says Fred Olsen's Justin Stanton.

BOOK EARLY

"We're anticipating a big increase in UK visitors," notes vice-president for UK and Europe at Princess Cruises, Tony Roberts. "Our advice for agents with passengers looking to travel in 2019 would be to book early, especially if they plan to holiday at peak period with families."

APPEAL TO FAMILIES

Despite the distance, many cruises down under are very family friendly - kids will love the chance to spot whales or cuddle a koala.

SELL THE THRILL

Don't forget that this is a one-off cruise for most passengers, so make sure they get the chance to visit all the places they've put on their wish list.

KNOW YOUR CLIENT

Due to the exotic, remote nature of these destinations, the best way to view the Australian landscape is from the water. "Travel advisors know their clients best, where they have been and where they should go. Australia and New Zealand offer so many rich opportunities," says director of global PR & strategic initiatives at Seabourn, Brian Badura.



Maori traditions are just one of New Zealand's intriguing attractions



Glorious scenery is part of the package: Milford Sound, New Zealand



A trip to Tasmania can yield opportunities to see all kinds of wildlife

has one of the driest climates on earth, whereas New Zealand is famed for its varied weather, and passengers should be advised to pack a raincoat.

"Australia and New Zealand allow guests to experience awe-inspiring landscapes filled with incredible and unique wildlife. Complete with towering mountains and stunning, verdant valleys, it's the perfect winter destination for UK passengers," says Cunard sales director Gary Anslow.

The fact that Australia and New Zealand are so remote for British passengers is definitely part of their charm, but distance can also be a drawback. "For many passengers a trip down under is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and planning a trip like this can be overwhelming," says Neil Barclay, head of sales for Viking.

"One of the advantages of seeing each destination on a cruise is that experienced operators take all of the stress, planning and organisation out of

their hands so guests can sit back, relax, unpack just once and still see all of the major highlights of these two incredible countries," he notes.

Passengers who would enjoy immersive cruising, or who are keen to cruise to less accessible regions, such as remote Macquarie Island, should travel with Silversea, Ponant, Seabourn, Viking and similar cruise lines that use smaller vessels. "Guests on our Australia and New Zealand itinerary will be able to experience *Viking Orion*, our newest ocean ship, which holds a maximum of 930 guests. *Orion* is the first ship in the fleet to feature a Viking resident astronomer who offers lectures and stargazing sessions on board," notes Neil Barclay.

Passengers should also understand that many major sites, including parts of the Outback and The Great Barrier Reef, are not accessible from larger cruise ships. "Guests should make the most of their journey by adding on pre- or post-tours," advises Oceania's Carter.

Sophistication, as well as vintage appeal, are on the menu in Melbourne



SELL IT OUR TOP CRUISE PICKS FOR ITINERARIES THAT GO DOWN UNDER

AUSTRALIA ON ALL FRONTS

Fred Olsen's 28-night Iconic Australia with Sydney New Year tour leaves London Gatwick on 11 December 2019, calling at Bali, Broome, Fremantle, Albany, Kangaroo Island, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns. Prices from £5,199 per person, incl flights. fredolsencruises.com

MAORIS AND MAGICAL CITIES

Viking's action-packed 15-day Australia and New Zealand cruise, plus a six- night Best of Australia land tour leaves Auckland on 6 March 2020, calling at Tauranga, Napier, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hobart, Melbourne and finishes up in Sydney. Prices from £9,899 per person. vikingcruises.co.uk

AUCKLAND TO THE OUTBACK

Oceania's exciting 14-day Outrageous Outback regatta cruise leaves Sydney on 6 January 2020 and calls at Eden, Melbourne, Burnie, Dunedin, Akaroa, Wellington, Napier, Gisbourne, Rotorua, ending up in Auckland. Prices from £7,919 per person, including flights. oceaniacruises.com

CAPE TOWN TO 'CUP TOWN'

Cunard's 26-night Cape Town to Melbourne cruise leaves Cape Town on 20 November 2019 and calls at Port Elizabeth, Reunion, Mauritius, Perth, Albany, Esperance, Adelaide, ending in Melbourne, home of Australia's best known horse race. Prices from £2,239 per person. cunard.co.uk

FROM FJORDS TO VICTORIAN GEMS

Princess Cruises' laidback 12-night Australia and New Zealand cruise departs Sydney on 15 December 2019, then calls at Melbourne, Hobart, Dunedin, Akaroa and Tauranga. The itinerary finishes in Auckland. Prices start from £1,199 per person. princess.com ⚓



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Seagoing chic is the theme for The Topside Restaurant

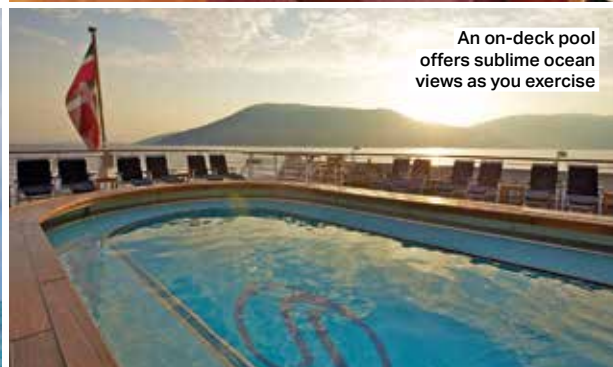


SEADREAM YACHT CLUB'S SEADREAM II

SeaDream Yacht Club's twin yachts, *SeaDream I & II*, are intimate boutique ships hosting just 112 guests. Passengers are treated to a personalised service, including an open bar, and gratuities are included. Suites and staterooms come with ocean views – there are 54 Yacht Club staterooms, 16 of which can be converted to eight Commodore suites. Guests can indulge in luxury in the Owner's suite, which features a private master bedroom and bathroom suite. The line has recently opened bookings for its 2020 season, which starts in the Caribbean and includes a call in Cuba.



The Library has a cosy but luxurious atmosphere



An on-deck pool offers sublime ocean views as you exercise



Passengers can enjoy a tippie at the Piano Bar



The Top of the Yacht Bar offers a sociable venue



Guests can join in the fun at the casino



Classic 1930s lines feature in the ship's Admiral Suite



Five-star standards rule in the dining salon



Six of the best... Music cruises

Whip out the air guitars and prepare for a voyage of musical discovery, from headline rockers and hep cats to enchanting classics. **Gary Peters** has all the details

JOIN THE JAZZ AGE

It's all about jazz and nothing else on the **Smooth Jazz Cruise**, which has been running since 2004. Close to 40,000 passengers have sailed on more than 20 itineraries since then, and the 2020 edition promises to be the best and biggest yet, with a colossal line-up featuring 21 performers at the 'Greatest Party at Sea', as some have called it. There are two departures in 2020, both from Miami – the first on 18 January and the second on 14 March, on board *Celebrity Infinity*. Prices start from approximately £2,100pp for an inside cabin.

TAKE TO THE STAGE

A full-on, bonafide musical theatre festival is what guests can expect from **Stages**, which is held on board Royal Caribbean's *Navigator of the Seas*, departing 14 October 2019 from Southampton, round trip, with a day in Dublin. Confirmed special guests include Alfie Boe, Sheridan Smith and Collabro, with many more to follow over the coming months. The format follows a traditional land-based festival, with multiple shows running simultaneously and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. There is also an as-yet-unconfirmed unique theme night during the cruise. Prices from £799pp for an inside cabin.

KISS guarantees
costume drama



Sample the 1990s on
the Boaty Weekender



Kenny Loggins
goes back in time

RELIVING THE 80S

Return to a time of big hair, copious quantities of hairspray and spandex on the aptly named **80s Cruise**, tagged as the 'ultimate 80s party' by the promoter, Entertainment Cruise Productions. With the star line-up including Dee Snider of Twisted Sister fame, Kenny Loggins, who wrote and sang *Footloose*, and Berlin, guests are sure to be transported back in time. Speaking in 2018, Snider said: "It's going to be bigger, louder and more radical than ever." Tubular theme nights are also a highlight of the eight-day itinerary, which departs 2 March 2019 from Fort Lauderdale on *Celebrity Infinity*. Prices from approximately £1,950pp per person for an inside cabin.

LOVE IT LOUD

Now in its ninth year, the **KISS Kruise** is heaven for all the rock 'n' rollers out there. Departing Miami on 30 October 2019 on board *Norwegian Pearl*, The Starchild, Demon, Spaceman and Catman put on an epic five-day cruise, which also features music from support acts. Organised by Sixthman – which since 2001 has hosted more than 250,000 guests on a variety of themed cruises – the KISS edition is undoubtedly one of the finest of its kind, partly because of the talent and longevity of its indefatigable headline act. Those interested should join the pre-sale period now, as full prices have yet to be announced.

MAGIC RECREATED

Cruising from Barcelona to Sardinia, the **Boaty Weekender** was devised to recreate the Bowie Weekender, a festival held in 1999 in Sussex that was the inspiration for the long-running festival All Tomorrow's Parties. The four-day 2019 cruise features live performances from Scottish band Belle and Sebastian – who are also the organisers of the event – and a Q&A with the band, as well as sets from support acts, of which Belle and Sebastian said in a statement: "They're going to earn their passage by playing their best for you, digging deep into their musical reservoirs." Those who reserve a stateroom during the pre-sale period will get an exclusive cruise vinyl. Prices from £979pp for an interior room on *Norwegian Pearl*.

CLASSICAL MOMENTS

Saga's 10-night **Classical Music on the Danube** itinerary starts with three days in Vienna before departing for Budapest on the Danube, stopping at Esztergom, Bratislava and more. Guests are treated to performances on board the ship – *Filia Rheni II* – and a programme of music-themed excursions, including the Hall of Mirrors in Vienna, where Mozart played, and the Palace Theatre in Hungary, where Prince Antal Grassalkovich II once kept a permanent 24-piece orchestra on call. Prices from £2,079pp, departing 18 October 2019. ⚓

Ten of the best US ports



New York offers an itinerary like no other city in the world

America's cruise ports provide a colourful and eclectic mix of shopping, sight-seeing and sporting activities. **Kathryn Liston** reports

1 New York City

The iconic Statue of Liberty provides a warm welcome to the Big Apple for passengers cruising into the Manhattan (a 15-minute walk from Midtown) or Brooklyn Red Hook terminals. From the neon glitz of Times Square and Broadway to the high-end stores of Fifth Avenue, this city really does never sleep. Plus there's the fascinating 9/11 Memorial & Museum, Greenwich Village, Central Park, Top of the Rock, Empire State Building and MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) to keep everyone amused.

SELL IT: Cunard's 14-night Grand Eastbound crossing out of New York on *Queen Mary 2* calls at Boston and Newport Rhode Island. Prices from £2,347pp departing 30 June 2019.

2 Miami

With 22 cruise lines berthing 55 ships every year, it's no wonder Port Miami is known as the 'cruise capital of the world'. Across the causeway, the gateway to the Caribbean and Mexico offers dramatic views of downtown Miami, where passengers will find world-class dining, Art Deco architecture, exhilarating water sports, designer shopping and sandy beaches offering trendy bars and flamboyant cocktails.

SELL IT: A seven-day Western Caribbean cruise from Miami with Norwegian Cruise Line visits Honduras, Belize and Mexico. Prices start from £669 based on a 31 March 2019 departure.

Boston is welcoming and walkable at any time of year



SALES TIP

"If you want to cruise in New England in the autumn book early, as autumn foliage itineraries are extremely popular. Leave plenty of time for the embarkation process as it can take longer than usual – and don't forget to apply for an ESTA."

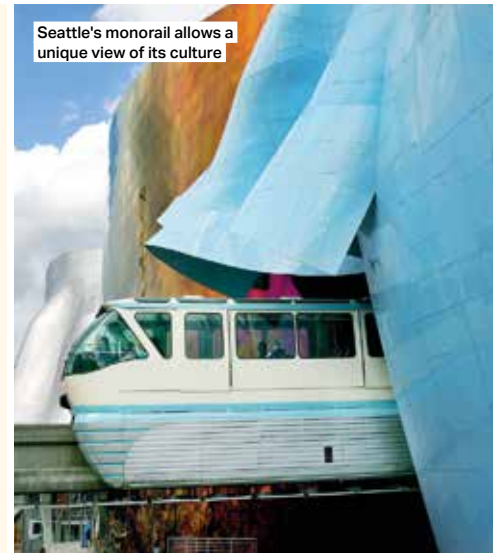
Elaine Gillard,
senior sales & marketing
manager, Crystal Cruises

SALES TIP

"When selling a cruise to or from the US, package a pre- or post-cruise stay or tour to engage new-to-cruise customers. Stress the variety of cruises on offer – we sail from 14 US ports, from three to 16 days, meaning there is a cruise out there to suit all customers. Also, use the tools available to showcase the product, such as Carnival's YouTube channel."

Hannah Beagley,
Carnival Cruise Line
account manager

Seattle's monorail allows a unique view of its culture



3 Boston

There's no better time to visit New England than in the Fall when the leaves are in full technicolour. There are also plenty of highlights in walkable Boston whatever the time of year – historic buildings, the Bunker Hill monument, Freedom Trail, hop-on-hop-off trolley tours, whale-watching and scrumptious seafood chowder. The Flynn Cruiseport is close to the Boston Fish Pier and shops and it's about a 20-minute walk to the Institute of Contemporary Art and 40 minutes to the tourist areas and aquarium.

SELL IT: P&O's 30-night North America & Canada round-trip cruise from Southampton visits 11 ports. Prices from £4,035pp based on 6 September 2019 departure.

4 Fort Lauderdale

A popular port for new ships, Port Everglades, on the south-east coast of Florida, will welcome Holland America's *Nieuw Statendam* and *Celebrity Edge* later this year, as well as offering more summer sailings. Cruise terminal 25 has been revamped and now offers interactive art installations and state-of-the-art technology. Downtown, passengers can shop at Sawgrass Mills, the world's largest outlet mall, feast on succulent seafood and browse art galleries galore at FATVillage.

SELL IT: A 14-day Azores & Normandy expedition on HAL's *Nieuw Statendam* visits five destinations. Prices from £1,399pp based on 21 April 2019 departures.

5 Port Canaveral (Orlando)

The closest port to Orlando's theme parks, it's an hour's drive to Walt Disney World, Discovery Cove, Universal Studios, Epcot and Disney's Animal Kingdom. The Kennedy Space Center is 18 miles away. The port offers a variety of amenities, too: fishing, beaches, waterfront restaurants and shopping at the Cove, plus the seven-storey Exploration Tower has an observation deck, theatre and gift shop.

SELL IT: Disney Cruise Line's three-night Bahamian cruise from Port Canaveral visits Nassau and Disney Castaway Cay. Prices from £1,427 for two adults departing 4 March 2019.

6 Seattle

The main US port for cruises to Alaska provides a host of laid-back attractions within a short walk of the Bell Street Pier cruise terminal. These include the famous Pike Place Market – where passengers will find fabulous seafood restaurants on the waterfront – Seattle Aquarium and Great Wheel. The Smith Cove cruise terminal, at the north end of the waterfront, is 10 minutes from the city's shops and its iconic Space Needle tower with revolving glass floor.

SELL IT: A seven-night Alaska cruise out of Seattle on Celebrity Cruises' *Solstice* visits seven destinations and ends in Vancouver. Prices from £899pp based on a 6 September 2019 departure.

7 Los Angeles

Passengers wanting to enjoy the glitz and glamour of this west-coast city can check out the scene at Long Beach, spot a celebrity or two on Rodeo Drive, stroll down the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and take a fun tour of Hollywood and the Universal and Warner Brothers studios. Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm provide exhilarating rides aplenty. The San Pedro World Cruise Center is 25 miles south of downtown LA.

SELL IT: A 15-night Hawaiian Islands cruise from Los Angeles with Princess Cruises visits four South Sea islands. Prices from £1,079pp based on a 24 March 2019 departure. >



Cable cars make light work of the hills in San Francisco

SALES TIP

“New York and San Francisco are among my all-time favourites to cruise in and out of, providing history with a huge sense of excitement of what is to come. They bring out all that is best about cruising.

- Pre-cruise in New York – stay downtown for fewer crowds and to see the best sights
- San Francisco – on a pre-cruise trip, stay near Embarcadero for an easy and cheap arrival by airport train and good access to the city's trams
- Think adventure: New Zealand, the South Pacific, Hawaii or Asia from San Francisco; from New York sail along the coast to Quebec, or take a transatlantic cruise.”

Howard Roberts,
managing director, Home and Cruise, Beaumaris, North Wales

8 San Francisco

The iconic Golden Gate Bridge makes a fantastic backdrop for a sail-away. The James R Herman and Pier 35 cruise terminals – a favourite for cruises to Hawaii, South America, and Mexico – are within walking distance along the waterfront of Fisherman's Wharf, Lombard Street, with its tight hairpin turns and steep hills, and the Cable Car Museum.

SELL IT: An eight-day cruise to Vancouver on Crystal Cruises' *Symphony* visits Monterey, Astoria and Seattle. Prices from £3,933pp based on a 17 June 2019 departure.

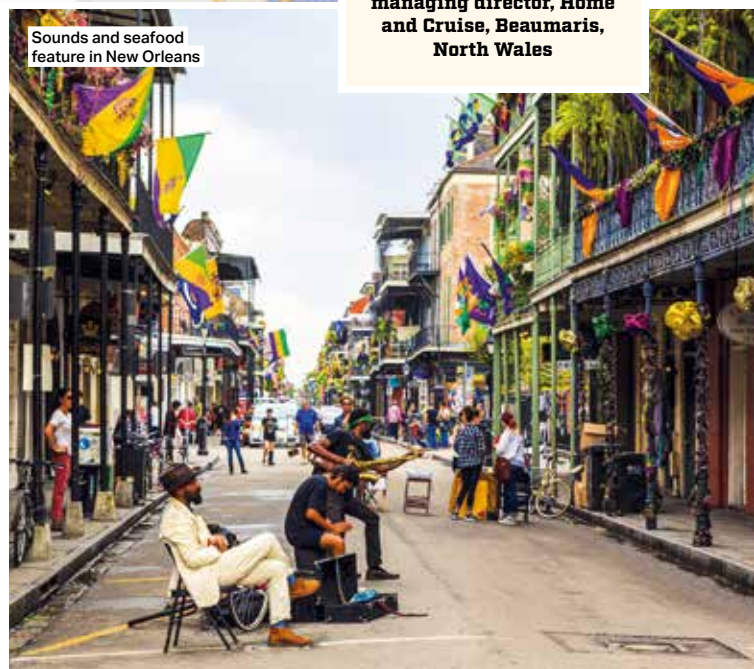
9 Baltimore

Popular for cruises to Bermuda, New England and Canada, the Maryland Cruise Terminal is also within an hour's drive of Washington DC and a short walk from the city's restaurants, shopping and museums. Passengers will love exploring the magnificent inner harbour and its best-loved neighbourhoods, including Little Italy, the Canton waterfront, and hip Federal Hill, where they can enjoy fabulous views over the city and harbour.

SELL IT: A seven-day Eastern Caribbean cruise with Carnival on *Carnival Pride* visits Grand Turk, Half Moon Cay and Freeport. Prices from £559pp, based on an 8 September 2019 departure.



Baltimore is a take-off point for the Caribbean



Sounds and seafood feature in New Orleans

10 New Orleans

The cruise terminals are a short walk from the historic French Quarter, Warehouse District and Outlet Collection at Riverwalk, on the Mississippi, where passengers will find 60 shops and 20 restaurants serving seafood and spicy Creole dishes. Other nearby attractions include Mardi Gras World, where thousands of carnival floats are designed and created every year, plus the National World War II Museum.

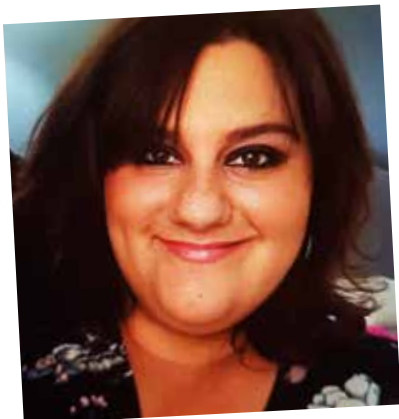
SELL IT: A seven-night Western Caribbean cruise with Royal Caribbean visits Mexico and Grand Cayman. Prices from £528pp based on a 16 February 2019 departure. ⚓



*Meet me in
Port Royal Jamaica
in 2019*

Captain Henry Morgan





"Top of my list has to be Viking's ultimate world cruise"

Sabrina Piscioneri, sales executive at Viking Cruises, reminisces about the Rhine, extols the virtues of Italian cuisine and ticks off lots on her wish list

Why is your cruise line the best of all cruise lines, would you say?

Viking is the leader in both river and ocean cruising. We really do deliver on our brand promise – to give our guests a way to explore the world in comfort. I think what sets us apart is that Viking offers such excellent value for money: from return UK flights to complimentary wifi, gratuities and even the use of our gorgeous spa facilities, not to mention being able to go out and explore a new place every day on our included shore excursions. And you can enjoy all of this while waking up in some of the world's most wonderful destinations every day.

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

Nicole Kidman; her elegance is understated and she never tries to replicate anyone else – she is simply stunning in her own right.

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

"Are there any huge waves on the river?"

How many of your cruise line's ships have you sailed on and do you have a favourite among them?

In the short space of time I've been part of the Viking family, I have been lucky enough to sail on one of our many beautiful longships and experienced one of the most scenic rivers in Europe, the



Norway's Northern Lights are a spectacle worth seeking out



Nicole Kidman is a role model for any cruise line

Rhine. I have also been on three of our ocean ships while in port in the UK. All our ships are identical, so have the same features, however the *Viking Star* – the very first of our ocean ships – still exudes great elegance. You instantly feel at home the moment you step on board.

Do you have a favourite on-board restaurant, and why?

Coming from an Italian background, it goes without saying that Manfredi's has to be my ultimate favourite place to eat. The food is exquisite; not only that, but I feel right at home with so many dishes from different regions in Italy. Better still, there are absolutely no extra charges to dine in this restaurant, and the same goes for all our other alternative dining outlets on our ocean ships.

Which port would you definitely disembark in and what would you opt to do there?

There are so many stunning places to choose from, but I would definitely disembark in Alta, Norway, which features on our In Search of the Northern Lights itinerary. I would take a ride with the beautiful husky dogs (they look just like my own gorgeous husky, called Bella) and then head to the Igloo Hotel on a snowmobile ride. The wintery landscape oozes Northern natural beauty, which I absolutely love.

Which cruise is on your wish list?

I'd love to see all the seven wonders of the world and to visit at least one country from every continent. Top of my list has to be Viking's ultimate world cruise, which sets sail from Greenwich in August 2019. This is the world's longest continuous cruise and would pretty much tick off my whole wish list in one go.

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

I would be very reluctant to leave this industry because I have such a passion for it, but if I had to do something else I would go back to my musical theatre roots and become a full-time actress. ⚓



Manfredi's offers an authentic Italian vibe



Bowing out in style

As *Saga Sapphire* prepares to leave the fleet in 2020, **Rebecca Barnes** hops on board to sample the unique atmosphere one last time

You know you're on a ship that really cares about service when the captain makes an effort to talk to guests when on his daily walkabout. And it becomes even more apparent when you notice that the captain is on first-name terms with many of them.

Saga's very loyal passengers are on equally friendly terms with the crew, who they like to think of as extended family. "There is a unique relationship between staff and passengers," says the captain

of *Saga Sapphire*, Stuart Horne. "Guests come on board and the crew immediately recognise them – they even have nicknames for one another."

This philosophy applies to pre and post cruise, when passengers are picked up from home by a VIP transfer service and whisked to the airport or ship.

Boutique ship *Saga Sapphire* may be retiring in 2020 to make way for the new *Spirit of Discovery*, but the cruise line is adamant that core values will be kept, including the door-to-door service and

the great care and relaxed familiarity that passengers experience when on board.

With capacity for just 720 passengers, *Sapphire* is classic, yet contemporary, with no dated décor or furnishings in sight. Its size means that, even in the first couple of days, you don't get lost, and you'll get to meet people should you desire. I also have it on good authority that some people 'ship-hop' from one Saga cruise to another, effectively never getting off.

Cabins, which were upgraded in 2016 during a multimillion-pound refit, are >

THE ITINERARY

PISA

It's Pisa, so of course most of the focus is on the world-famous Leaning Tower. However, there's much more to enjoy in this Tuscan city, including a plethora of museums and cultural sites.

MONACO

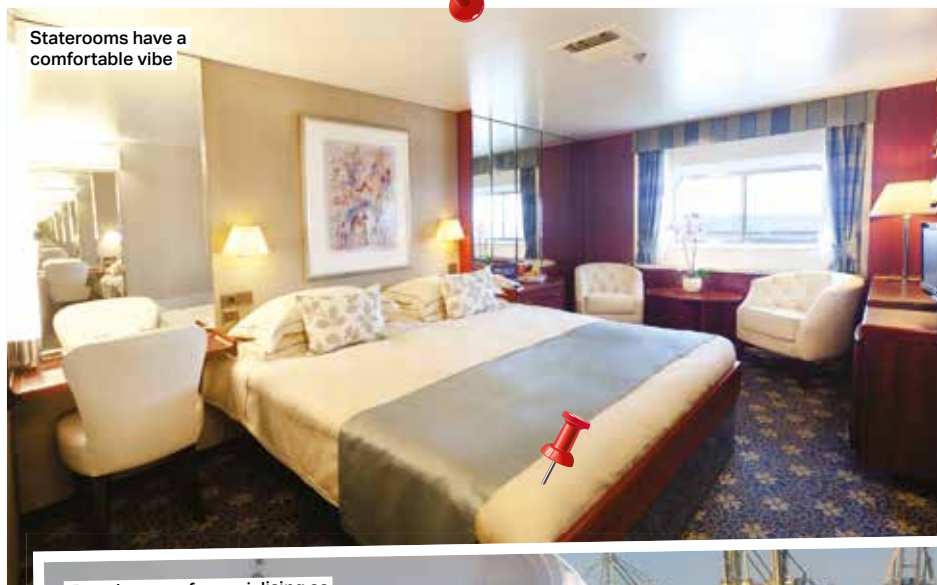
Upscale casinos, super yachts and the F1 Grand Prix – Monaco is the playground of the rich and famous.

BARCELONA

The Catalan capital is a cosmopolitan city that draws in visitors from afar to its world-class architecture.



Monaco is just one of the cities on a classic Med voyage



There's space for socialising as well as lounging around the pool

spacious and homely. Standard cabins are some of the biggest afloat, with an average size of 220 square feet. There are also 44 cabins specifically designed for solo travellers.

Dining under the stars

After a seamless embarkation, I am all smiles as I open the door to a superior cabin with its good-sized balcony, spacious bathroom with bath and shower, fluffy bathrobes and corner sofa.

Toasting the start of a four-night Musical Mediterranean cruise, I sit down to enjoy a cocktail in the sociable Drawing Room on deck 11.

Docked in Pisa overnight, there's time to dine under the stars and sample a 'blood moon' drink at The Verandah. As well as being an idyllic setting, it's a great introduction to the food on board, which turns out to be some of the best I have experienced on the ocean.

Saga is now all inclusive so meals and a

choice of wines with lunch and dinner are offered as standard with every cruise booked. While dinner is always served in a two-hour sitting, you are free to sit wherever you like.

When the weather is fine, you can enjoy more al fresco dining by the outside pool. This has a British seaside feel – without the seagulls or sea spray.

Another restaurant worthy of mention is East to West, serving creative Indian, Sri Lankan and Thai cuisine. I choose the Atlantic seared scallops and an aromatic duck curry, both of which are seriously impressive and quite a taste sensation.

While reservations are required (it is very popular), there's no extra charge to dine here. And you won't want to miss what's been called the finest afternoon tea on the ocean, served daily in the Britannia Lounge.

Nightcaps can be enjoyed in the quirky Cooper's Bar, which is styled as a tribute to the late, great Tommy Cooper, with



East to West offers a choice of exotic menus



Stripes and an aqua theme set the tone for the indoor pool

SELLING HIGHLIGHTS

1

Attentive crew offer a first-class service – a great cruise for anyone who wants to be cared for, from start to finish

2

Very impressive dining and plenty of variation, as well as spacious and homely cabins

3

Asian-themed Aqua spa provides something for everyone

4

Getting on board with Saga really does provide guests with a home-from-home atmosphere

5

See *Sapphire* now before it leaves the fleet



Food at The Grill, as on every one of Saga's ships, is now all inclusive



The Britannia Lounge is said to serve the best tea on the ocean



one-liner cushions and fez-shaped lampshades. Alternatively, there is the Aviator Lounge, which offers themed décor dedicated to the heroes of our skies.

First-class service

The following morning, as I stroll through the old town and Les Jardins Saint Martin in the principality of Monaco, I chat to one lady about her and her husband's past cruises with Saga, and the time when his life was saved by the on-board medical staff after he had a stroke.

And when, on our tender back to the ship, we encounter rather choppy conditions, I watch in awe as crew members help passengers – some less able than others – safely back on to the ship.

When you're not ashore exploring and want to work off those calories or simply get that body moving, *Sapphire* has a gym, keep-fit session and shuffleboard on deck 12. But when all you want to do is kick back and relax, the Asian-themed

Aqua spa is a wonderful place to spend a few hours of your voyage.

The spa offers a range of massages and facials, plus body wraps, manicures and hairdressing. My spa experience is complemented by a blissful 50-minute Elemis Swedish massage – it's a revitalising antidote to the searing Barcelona heat outside.

After the ship has docked overnight in Barcelona, the cruise ends with a venture into town for a tapas dinner before packing for our departure.

While it will be a sad day for many when *Sapphire* retires, warm welcomes will always be synonymous with Saga, so passengers can expect many more excellent ocean adventures. ⚓

SELL IT

Saga Sapphire's 33-night Grand Finale voyage departs 6 May 2020. Prices start from £13,402pp.

Industry insider

The CTN team has been out and about, hobnobbing with the good and the great of the glamorous cruise world to bring you a flavour of all the recent launches, lunches, events and get-togethers



A NOT SO SILENT NIGHT

We're invoking poetic licence here, as the recent Seabourn event was in fact held at lunchtime at the incredibly swish Bluebird Café in the new White City development in west London. Guests, including legendary TV travel presenter Judith Chalmers, sang their hearts out and enjoyed a delicious three-course lunch with all the trimmings.



KINKY BOOTS GET ON BOARD WITH KEEL LAYING

The last thing you expect to see in the middle of a freezing shipbuilding yard filled with hard hats and sensible shoes is a troupe of stunningly kitted out drag queens. The ladies were celebrating the news that the musical *Kinky Boots* will be the show on board NCL's new ship, *Encore*.



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Norway in December: despite the serious chill, our time with Hurtigruten at the Kleven shipyard – to visit *MS Roald Amundsen* and sister ship *MS Fridtjof Nansen* – was warmed by the great welcome and hospitality of our hosts. These vessels will be the world's first hybrid-powered cruise ships, potentially cutting emissions by as much as 20 per cent.



WINTER WONDERLAND

Industry association CLIA pulled out all the stops at its bewitching winter ball, which was held amid the stunning scenery of the Cotswolds. A conference kicked off the proceedings, followed by an awards ceremony and then the main event – in a beautifully decorated ballroom, 150 guests enjoyed a truly sumptuous dinner and seasonal entertainment.

BACK OF THE NET

We were lucky enough to spend the afternoon at the home of football giant Chelsea FC as it announced an exciting partnership with MSC Cruises. The deal, which runs until June 2021, means the cruise line will be the Premier League club's official global cruise partner, with a team-up for *Bellissima's* March launch.



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Our commitment to cuisine shines in our artisanal ingredients and our array of gourmet restaurants, but truly comes to life with our passionate chefs who craft each recipe from the heart.



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