

Your comprehensive guide to selling cruise holidays

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TRADE NEWS

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- Cruise Stars Awards
- Norwegian Encore
- Spirit of Adventure

6

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ABTA
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EDITORIAL TEAM

GROUP EDITOR
Colette Doyle
colette.doyle@realresponsemedia.com

EDITOR
Gary Peters

FEATURES EDITOR
Melissa Moody

ART DIRECTOR
Phil Couzens

DESIGNER
Denis Pobric

SUBEDITOR
Caroline Parish

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Barnaby Moore

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
Peter Grant
peter.grant@realresponsemedia.com

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Rochelle Streater
rochelle.streater@realresponsemedia.com

COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Zarina Kapasi
zarina.kapasi@realresponsemedia.com

CEO
Chris Pitchford
chris.pitchford@realresponsemedia.com

For subscriptions & enquiries:
020 8444 2554
info@cruisetradenews.com

All enquiries
+44 (0) 20 8444 2554

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Contents

JANUARY 2020



REGULARS

- 6 The Buzz**
Our essential round-up of the latest happenings, developments and news in the cruise sector
- 9 Trend watch**
The hottest ship launches taking place this year
- 12 Sales inspiration**
Incentives, fam trips and offers to help you target your clients effectively and enhance your career
- 19 In my view**
Cruise industry experts, in their own words
- 25 Win at selling**
How to give clients the right direction on one of the ultimate holiday destinations – the Mediterranean
- 26 Rep on the road**
Oceania Cruises' business development manager, UK & Ireland, James Scott, on what happens next
- 50 Diary**
A flavour of recent launches, lunches, events and get-togethers involving our co-workers in cruise

FEATURES

- 14 Making waves**
Expanding the fleet – how CMV is spreading its small-ship message with upgrades and acquisitions
- 17 Spotlight on**
A-Rosa is cutting emissions with some very smart tech
- 20 Interview**
TUI River Cruises – we watch it count down to launch
- 22 Six of the best**
Music cruises – from dancefloor epics and jazz masters to classical combinations and rock and folk greats
- 27 Cruise Stars Awards**
Celebrating some of the finest talent in the industry
- 32 Cruise Stars Q&A**
One-to-one with an award-winning cruise line star
- 34 Focus on...**
The perks of ditching company and going it alone
- 38 River cruising**
How to explore further afield on an exotic river itinerary
- 40 Ship review**
Sampling the Breakaway-Plus class ship *Norwegian Encore*, with entertainment for all its 4,000 guests

DESTINATION SPECIAL REPORT

- 44 Hotlist**
News from the planet's most happening destinations, all the way from the Amazon to the Nile
- 46 Australia & New Zealand**
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^A = Anchor Port ^{PA} = Possible Anchor Port → = Pre- and/or Post-cruise flight

Destinations in bold denote the embarkation and disembarkation ports. Destinations in italics are Cruise By/Transit Only.



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Visit shinerewardsclub.com for more information and full terms and conditions.

*Available on voyages of 7 nights or more, booked between 18 December 2019 and 2 March 2020, excludes 2021 Full World Voyages, Early Saver and Saver fares.



EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the January issue

A happy New Year to you all. It's the time of resolutions – for some, these quickly fade into the background, while others will somehow faithfully stick to their 2020 plans with admirable willpower (count me as one of the former).

Speaking of 2020, what a huge 12 months it is for the cruise industry. Some may argue they have heard that before, and yes, they are probably correct. However, there is an undeniable feeling of expectation running throughout the sector, whether that be river, ocean, expedition, luxury, boutique or any other branch.

Virgin Voyages makes its debut, with the launch of *Scarlet Lady* in April, while Celebrity Cruises welcomes the second vessel in its celebrated Edge-class, *Celebrity Apex*, which is sailing from Southampton for its first five voyages. You can read more about the latest ship launches in our Trend Watch column on page 10.

Elsewhere, we look at some of our Cruise Stars Awards winners, starting on page 27. These awards, which were held in central London, celebrate excellence across both travel agencies and cruise lines, with categories such as PR & marketing stars, management stars and sales stars.

Our big interview piece features TUI River Cruises. In this, we speak to general manager Abi Devaney to learn more about the line's new river vessels and what they will offer guests.



Above: Catch up with Uniworld on page 44

This month we also join Norwegian Cruise Line for the launch of its latest Breakaway Plus ship, *Norwegian Encore* (page 40), and also focus on the perks of solo cruising.

And if all that wasn't enough, we have a very special poster pull-out from Saga, featuring the latest on its forthcoming ship, *Spirit of Adventure*.

We hope you enjoy the issue – see you again next month.

GARY PETERS

Editor, Cruise Trade News

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RRM EVENTS



Martin MacKinnon: "This is a terrific opportunity to introduce our brand to agents new to selling cruise"

Royal Caribbean joins the Cruise Challenge

Cruise Trade News is excited to reveal that Royal Caribbean is participating in the 2020 Cruise Challenge events. The event, which combines learning with an interactive gameshow, is recognised as a unique agent roadshow. During 2020 it will travel the length and breadth of the country, entertaining and educating travel agents in equal measure.

Speaking to CTN about the announcement, Royal Caribbean International sales director Martin MacKinnon said:

"The Cruise Challenge presents a fun and innovative way for us to meet our trade agents and educate them on the Royal Caribbean brand and product offering.

"This is a terrific opportunity to introduce our brand to agents and homeworkers who are new to selling cruise. The Cruise Challenge 2020 is set to be a high-energy event and a fantastic reflection of our Royal Caribbean holidays, offering a platform to engage with our existing and potential trade partners."

In terms of what messages Royal Caribbean will provide, MacKinnon added: "We'll be

focusing on our brand USPs as well as our unmissable offerings for UK guests in 2020.

"We'll be equipping attendees with the knowledge they'll need to really floor their customers when they hear the epic adventures they can have with Royal Caribbean.

"The Cruise Challenge offers agents the chance to hear the latest Royal Caribbean brand updates, which will really resonate with their customers. The nature of the events means the information we share will be readily

digestible and no doubt the competitive challenge element will help ensure maximum retention. Not to mention a networking opportunity with others in the industry at what's set to be a fun and entertaining evening."

Royal Caribbean also has plans to boost its training toolkit and agent reward scheme.

"Our Club Rewards platform is the industry's leading agent reward programme, offering incredible incentives and competitions," said MacKinnon. "Following extensive feedback from trade partners, we've also recently launched L.E.A.R.N., our new training platform for Club Rewards members."

"The Cruise Challenge 2020 is set to be a high-energy event and a fantastic reflection of our holidays"

In B R I E F

And the winner is...

● We are happy to announce that this month's winner of the CTN newsletter draw and £25 Amazon voucher is Nicola Shires of the Midcounties Co-operative. The CTN newsletter is the one-stop shop featuring the latest in cruise news, features, destination guides, interviews and more.

Top reads

● Connect with CTN on social media and our website, cruisetradenews.com, for even more cruise content. The hottest stories this month include an interview with Scenic's top bosses, a bumper survey outlining the benefits of joining a travel consortium and a look at some of the best themed cruises.

Cruise Challenge additions

● In other Cruise Challenge news, CTN is delighted to reveal that Avalon Waterways and Princess Cruises are joining the 2020 Cruise Challenge roadshow. See cruisetradenews.com for more information about this great event and how to sign up and take part.

NCL ditches plastic

● Norwegian Cruise Line has announced it is now free of single-use plastic bottles across the fleet. A total of six million bottles will be replaced as part of the project. The line is also planning to eliminate single-use plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles later this year as part of its Sail & Sustain programme.

COMPETITION

Advent calendar huge hit with agents

The *Cruise Trade News*/Fred Olsen Cruise Lines advent calendar has proved to be a huge success, with travel agents up and down the country taking part in an enormous prize giveaway.

This one-of-a-kind calendar, created to work in print and digital formats, contained a raft of fantastic prizes provided by Fred Olsen, including a trip to the heart of the Baltic on *Braemar* for 14 nights; a seven-night voyage through Holland and Belgium; and a journey on *Brabant* on the Moselle.

Fred Olsen head of sales Geoff Ridgeon said: "Our sponsorship of the CTN advent calendar has been a great success and has given us the chance to reward our

Advent calendar in numbers:

- More than **2,400** registrations
- Nearly **11,000** unique plays across the period
- Hundreds of prizes won



valued trade partners after all their hard work and support this year.

"There were a range of fabulous Fred Olsen giveaways on offer, from three tempting ocean and river cruises, to cases of wine and reusable water bottles.

"It has been a challenging year across the travel industry and we hope that our prizes have brought some much-needed festive cheer."

INDUSTRY

Travel Network Group members now selling A-Rosa

The Travel Network Group's Cruise Club members are now able to book all A-Rosa products.

The agreement means that all of the group's Cruise Club agents will have access to the entire A-Rosa international portfolio of cruises for 2020 and 2021.

The Travel Network Group's Cruise Club Concierge members will be able to book through their Cruise Club Concierge team, who can package the cruises together with flights, transfers and pre or post hotels.

A-Rosa UK and Ireland MD Lucia Rowe said: "Our partnerships are growing at a pace and having The Travel Network Group on board broadens our distribution channels further and is another step forward for us in our growth plans."

The Travel Network Group chief

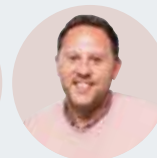
commercial officer Vim Vithaldas also welcomed the move, adding: "We are delighted to be teaming up with A-Rosa River Cruises. They offer a quality river cruise experience and it will give our members another alternative to extend to their customers in this increasingly popular sector."



APPOINTMENTS



Aurora Expeditions has appointed **James Turner** as business development manager for the UK. Turner will be responsible for initiating training and sales support with particular emphasis on tour operators, travel agencies and independent travel consultants.



Holland America Line and Seabourn have announced two internal promotions. **Aaron Myers** is now product, pricing & demand manager, taking on greater managerial responsibility, while **Emma Paolino** moves to a senior business development representative role.



Cruisingexcursions.com has appointed **Jack Titchen** as its head of digital. Titchen, previously digital marketing manager at Midcounties Co-operative Travel, will be responsible for overall digital strategy and will work with trade sales manager Kirsty Bachelor to improve the sales automation process.

RIVER CRUISING



Viking to add new ships on Seine

V

iking has revealed it will add four new ships to sail on the Seine.

The ships, inspired by the design of the Viking Longships, will launch in 2020 and will sail Viking's eight-day Paris and the Heart of Normandy itinerary in 2021.

Viking Fjorgyn, Viking Kari, Viking Radgrid and Viking Skaga – which will each accommodate 168 guests – will have 84 staterooms and many of the features found on the Viking Longships.

Viking chairman Torstein Hagen put the move in context: "We have always

had a strong vision for how to help guests explore the world in comfort.

"For 22 years, we have led the industry in defining what modern river cruising looks like for experienced travellers who have interests in history, art and culture.

"We continue to lead because we focus on the destination and we continue to innovate for our guests, offering them new and different opportunities for learning and opening doors around the world at places that may otherwise have been difficult to visit," he added.

INDUSTRY



New look for Cruise Nation

C

ruise Nation has updated its logo and website, as part of plans to drive sales and establish the brand as the UK's number-one choice for cruise holidays.

According to the company, the logo has been designed to communicate the

values of helpfulness, inspiration, passion, fun and innovation.

The website now includes improved site navigation and search functionality, meaning 90 per cent of deals are now bookable online.

In addition, the website's search forms and advanced search have been updated, and there is also a new smart code feature designed to make finding deals quicker and easier.

Cruise Nation owner and MD Phil Evans said: "We're on a mission to show the world that cruise holidays are for everyone, no matter who you are, what you like, where you want to go, or what your budget might be, so we are delighted to launch our new-look logo and website, which we hope will help towards that mission."



MARKETING GURU

In this series of articles, **Mark Lewsey**, head of marketing at Accord Marketing, talks us through a number of hot topics pertinent to the cruise industry. Here, he looks at how to use marketing tools to boost awareness

W

e hear it all the time. Companies are afraid of starting a conversation with an external marketing agency because they think it's the beginning of the end for their in-house team.

Often, the in-house team realises a fully integrated agency could help, but fear that pitching the idea to the boss may mean pitching their own demise. The exact opposite should be the case. Marketing is hard work and, in order for it to be effective, collaboration is key.

Reasons to use an agency:

- Unmatched strength and depth of expertise. Everything they do is influenced by their deep understanding of the consumer path to purchase
- An in-house marketer will know their brand inside out, but an agency has a deeper understanding of the wider market and competition
- Buying power. A reputable agency has excellent media relationships
- A brand's assets are the marketing kit – the name, logo, visuals, fonts, icons, colours and tone of voice, anything communicating its mission
- First impressions are everything. Web design is the key to exploiting this. Find an agency that offers a web design service to create a visually elegant site to strengthen the brand

New ships

We round up some of the ocean vessels hitting the waves in 2020



The second Edge-class ship will feature the famed Magic Carpet

Apex arriving in April

Hot on the heels of *Celebrity Edge*, Celebrity Cruises will welcome the second Edge-class vessel, *Celebrity Apex*, in April.

The ship, which will sail from Southampton for her first five sailings, will offer a range of itineraries, including an eight-night Spain and Portugal cruise, a seven-night Norwegian Fjords voyage, and the 10-night Capital

Cities Cruise, which will take in capitals such as Oslo, Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Paris.

The ship will feature infinite retracting balconies and twin-level villas with outdoor plunge pools, as well as the iconic Magic Carpet, a cantilevered floating platform.

A total of 29 culinary venues will serve a range of cuisine, from Cypriot and Italian to French, raw and vegan.



Suites on *Splendor* are described as six-star hotel standard

Splendor on the seas

Luxury cruise line Regent Seven Seas Cruises is launching its latest Explorer-class vessel, the 750-passenger *Seven Seas Splendor*, in February. Hailed as a six-star floating hotel, the ship will feature white-gloved butlers, Michelin-quality tasting menus and a glitzy casino, and the art deco-inspired

Constellation Theatre. Guests will be able to choose from 10 cabin categories, from entry-level veranda suites through to the Regent Suite, which is four times the size of the average family home with an in-room spa.

The line is promising chic interiors across the ship as well as a strong focus on cuisine.

Virgin Voyages' first ship

While 2020 is a busy year for many lines, few have generated as much excitement and hubbub as *Scarlet Lady*, Virgin Voyages' first foray into the cruise industry.

The ship launches in April and will sail from Miami on four and five-day itineraries around the Caribbean with stops at Bahamian Beach Club at

Bimini, Virgin Voyages' private club. Passengers will be able to sleep in Rock Star suites, as the line targets a younger demographic.

Following in May 2021 will be *Valiant Lady*, the line's second ship. It will sail seven-night Mediterranean sailings out of Barcelona to destinations including France, Italy and Spain.



Virgin's suites will be aimed at a younger market

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Prices correct at time of print. On-board credit is based on 2 people sharing a cabin. €200 of on board credit for 8-day river cruises / €400 of on-board credit for 15-day river cruises. Sole occupancy cabins receive 50% credit. Exclusive solo departures and Russian river cruises are excluded from this offer. On-board credit can be used against any purchase on board including gratuities, except cruises on the Douro. Credit cannot be redeemed in cash and no change will be given for any left unspent credit. On-board credit cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Bookings must be made before 31 January 2020 to qualify for this incentive. Holidays are operated by and subject to booking conditions of Riviera Travel, ABTA V4744 ATOL 3430 protected. Subject to availability. Additional entrance costs may apply. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. For further information please write to Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs, DE14 1SP.



Signature benefits with Seabourn

Offer

Seabourn's 2020 signature savings event includes savings and value-added amenities on select 2020-2021 voyages aboard all five ships in the fleet.

The event, which runs until 28 February 2020, features complimentary suite upgrade, on-board credit, business-class flights on select 2020 European itineraries and up to £500 air credit per person.

The initiative applies to select worldwide cruises in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, Antarctica and Patagonia, Alaska, Australia and New Zealand, Asia, Arabia & India, Canada & New England, the Caribbean, Panama Canal, South America, Pacific Coast, and transatlantic voyages.



Incentive

Clients can see the glaciers of South America



Fancy meeting monkeys on a £4,000 Titan tour?

Win a Titan holiday voucher

Titan Travel's New Year incentive campaign, available until 29 February 2020, is giving one agent the chance to win a £4,000 Titan holiday voucher.

Each Titan booking will qualify as one entry and will be placed into the draw. The more Titan holidays an agent books, the more chances to win.

A winner will be picked at random and notified by 8 March 2020. Agents can also win lifestyle vouchers.

To claim vouchers, email agentincentives@titantravel.co.uk within seven days of making the booking.

Visit titanagents.co.uk

Cheers to MSC

MSC Cruises' Wave promotion includes the addition of a premium drinks package for all bookings made for the Fantastica Experience.

The promotion runs until 22 March 2020 and includes cruises throughout summer 2020 and winter 2020/2021.

The line's UK & Ireland MD, Antonio Paradiso, said: "We are really excited to be launching our all-inclusive Wave promotion earlier than ever."

"This is the third year for the promotion and we hope it will prove popular again this year."

Details at msccruises.co.uk

Offer



Some trips on MSC ships will qualify for this year's Wave promo

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

Incentive



Amsterdam is on the APT list of destinations

Offer

Princess unveils Wave offer

The Princess European Capitals cruise calls at Copenhagen

Princess Cruises has announced its best sale yet as part of its Wave 2020 campaign.

Voyages start as low as £499pp for seven nights and a low deposit of £50pp is also available.

In addition, Princess Cruises is offering an optional on-board savings package, which includes premium drinks, gratuities and unlimited wifi for £35 a day, per guest.

This package promises to benefit travel agents, as it can be added to existing bookings and to retail and net fares, meaning it is commissionable. The sale and the additional package have been designed to be "simple to understand, simple to buy".

The offer runs until 2 March 2020 on 1,500 Princess voyages up to April 2022.

Example itineraries:

- A seven-night Mexican Riviera cruise departing 2 May 2020 on board *Royal Princess*, round trip from Los Angeles, calling at Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan, and Puerto Vallarta. Prices from £499pp cruise only or from £744pp inclusive of the on-board savings package.

- A 10-night European Capitals cruise departing 21 September 2020 on board *Island Princess*, sailing round trip from Southampton, calling at Hamburg, Aarhus, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Oslo, Rotterdam, and more. Prices from £1,399pp cruise only or from £1,819pp inclusive of the on-board savings package.

Win Love2 shop vouchers

Agents booking any APT holiday up to 29 February 2020 will receive £25-worth of Love2shop vouchers, as part of the company's current incentive programme.

In addition, there are some attractive incentives for guests. They can save on a range of itineraries, including:

- Up to £3,000pp on the 15-day Magnificent Europe cruise. Sailing along the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers between Amsterdam and Budapest, guests will take in three APT Signature Experiences. Prices start from £2,395pp twin share, departing 13 November 2020.
- Up to £2,000pp on the 15-day European Gems essential river cruise, taking in up to 14 towns, villages and cities across four countries. Prices start from £1,995pp for a twin share, departing 4 May 2020.

Incentive

Visit CMV in 2020

Cruise & Maritime Voyages has 28 ship visits, running across five ships, throughout the year.

There are 13 different UK ports hosting the visits, which will include a short presentation, refreshments, a five-course lunch and time to explore the facilities and the accommodation options.

Ships include *Columbus*, *Magellan*, *Vasco da Gama*, *Marco Polo* and *Astoria*.

CMV head of trade sales Lisa Jacobs said: "CMV

remains committed to supporting our trade partners with plenty of opportunities for fam visits to our fleet of classic and traditional ships sailing from UK ports.

"We recommend agents book their places early. By offering a variety of alternative venues across the UK we are able to reduce agents' travel time."

For more details contact agents@cruiseandmaritime.com

CMV is inviting agents on *Magellan*, among other vessels



A new era

It's all go at Cruise & Maritime Voyages as it welcomes *Pacific Dawn* and *Pacific Aria*. Group commercial director **Chris Coates** explains all

Why is now the right time to increase the size of the CMV fleet?

We continue to experience growing demand for our traditional brand of cruising on our small to mid-sized ships. With almost 70 per cent of 2020 capacity sold and the most recent new ship, *Vasco da Gama*, joining the fleet in 2019, we feel that summer 2021 is the perfect time to introduce new capacity.

How will the new ships elevate the CMV brand?

Additional capacity is projected to increase CMV's market shares in 2021 within the UK and German markets. With increased capacity and sales and marketing expenditure, we expect brand visibility to be significantly elevated.

Is this the end of your expansion or do you expect to acquire additional ships in the near future?

We are still reviewing new market opportunities and looking to expand our presence in existing markets. Continued expansion and growth are very much on the agenda.

Why are *Pacific Dawn* and *Pacific Aria* – to be renamed – the right fit for the fleet?

Aria (ex- S Class), carrying around 1,200 passengers, will operate year-round ex-Germany, perfectly complementing her sister ship *Vasco da Gama*, which will continue to serve the German market on a summer-only basis and Australia in the winter.



Making waves

A distinctive atrium features aboard *Pacific Dawn*



CMV's Chris Coates

We are also experiencing increased demand from the south east of England through our growing distribution, so *Pacific Dawn* will homeport year-round at London Tilbury, supporting *Columbus* and providing extra capacity.

What upgrades do you intend to make on the ships?

This is still under review, but as *Pacific Dawn* will be positioned as an adult-only product, the teen/child centres will be changed into new public areas. Other upgrades for both vessels are currently under discussion.

What's the wow factor on the new ships?

We will continue to offer a traditional, value-based and destination-focused cruise experience for the adult-only market, complete with convenient regional departures.

Our smaller to mid-sized vessels – carrying 500-1,500 passengers – continue to prove a great attraction to a growing number of guests in the mature demographic and grey market.

You're also renaming *Astor* as *Jules Verne* and redeploying the vessel to the French market – why?

Based on extensive research and our experience of operating *Astoria* in France on a summer-only charter for the past five years, we believe that there is a strong market opportunity in France waiting to be exploited.

Jules Verne will be exclusively dedicated to the French-speaking premium cruise market, offering a stylish and elegant cruise experience for discerning guests seeking attentive and exemplary service standards, fine culinary French cuisine and a more traditional voyage experience. She will target the adult-only market, apart from selected three generation family cruises during the school holidays.

Why is small-ship cruising proving so popular?

We firmly believe that our clients prefer cruising with like-minded passengers, seeking friendships with a more relaxed ambience, friendly camaraderie and more intimate and personal levels of service.

This can be hard to achieve on the growing breed of mega-resort ships. Sometimes there can be just too much choice, which can become rather daunting. More passengers can also invariably mean more queuing, especially during port visits and embarkation. 📍

Intimate bar spaces are just one of *Aria's* attractions





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Spotlight *on...*

E-Motion

A-Rosa managing director UK & Ireland **Lucia Rowe** explains the idea behind the line's revolutionary new ship, designed to reduce emissions

Why launch this new concept?

At A-Rosa we pride ourselves in doing things differently. When we first created the brand back in 2000, we looked at innovating. In addition, we wanted to find ways for river cruising to become a real alternative to other types of holidays.

Our new E-Motion ship takes things to the next level and forms part of our global growth plans. Our aim is to lead the way, both in terms of sustainability and in attracting new cruisers to the rivers.

How will it help to reduce emissions?

This ship will feature a ground-breaking diesel/electric propulsion system. As soon as the ship approaches a town or city, it switches to an electric motor, powered by large batteries. This enables the ship to arrive at and depart from cities emission-free. The batteries are fully charged using charging current while the ship is moored. Put simply, the concept saves fuel and helps keep towns and cities clean.

A further innovation on the ship is the Damen Air Cavity System (DACS), air-bubble technology patented by the Concordia Damen shipyard. This makes it possible to save even more fuel thanks to air bubbles pumped under the ship's hull from the bow, before dispersing.

A heat recovery system will also be installed to help power the ship's heating system, plus a shallow-water management system that helps manage the ship's power usage. Both will help save fuel.

As well as the environmental aspect, what else makes the ship unique?

This ship is the first on the Rhine to have four decks. It has been designed from the outset with families and multi-generational groups in mind to help us grow and develop in this market segment.

A family area will be created where 12 family cabins and a dedicated kids' club



“This ship takes things to the next level”

room will be located. The large family cabins, which sleep up to five people, will feature a double bed and a sofa bed, plus two bunk beds complete with peepholes and curtains for the little ones.

The ship will also feature a separate children's pool, next to a large swimming

pool on the sun deck. Also, the restaurant will have a children's area where young guests can eat with friends if desired.

Will this attract more new to cruise?

Absolutely. It's fair to say that some agents may not immediately think of a river cruise when suggesting family options to clients, but this ship is a game-changer. It offers facilities and experiences that just haven't been available on rivers before and it heralds the future of travel on Europe's rivers, both in terms of space and sustainability.

You have put plenty of effort into making this new ship (such as its cabins) family friendly - why?

We believe that the rivers of Europe and the cities they run through have so much to offer families of all ages and this is why we introduced our kids cruise free concept. This ship has been designed from the very start with families and multi-gen groups in mind and allows us to step things up a level in terms of on-board facilities. For us, attracting this lucrative market is important because it is growing at such a pace. 📈



Family cabins are an innovation in line with the rise in the multi-gen market



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CALICO JACK is BACK

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Cruise
JAMAICA

In my VIEW

Hays Travel head of cruise **Catriona Parsons** discusses the brand's recent expansion and how it intends to capture the growing cruise market



What an incredible time it is to be in the travel business. I joined Hays Travel only seven weeks ago [at the time of writing], just before the company announced its major expansion. The landscape of travel is changing and evolving, and it's the lines that adapt that will end up being the strongest.

Evolving is what Hays Travel is known for. With the company acquiring the entire retail portfolio of the former Thomas Cook estate, it has been a busy time for us all, but it wouldn't have been possible or been such a success without the great teams that are helping the change to happen.

In just five weeks we have recruited approximately 2,500 former Thomas Cook employees and now we have

created another 1,500 jobs, including apprenticeships across the UK. This means that our branches will have the highest level of customer service, with specialists in cruise and foreign exchange in each branch.

Future growth

There is a massive boost in cruise travel at the moment, with the UK two million cruise passenger mark achieved for the first time at the end of 2018. In addition to that, more than 100 ships are on order worldwide, to be ready by 2027; 20 will be launched in 2020 alone.

As the UK's largest independent travel agent, Hays Travel is ideally placed to capture this growing part of the holiday market. Therefore, it's essential that we equip our people with the information they need to learn and hone their

"It's essential that our people have the knowledge to sell the right cruise to the right customer"

knowledge to ensure we always sell the right cruise to the right customer.

The Hays Travel Academy provides comprehensive training and our cruise experts also hone their knowledge and skills through trade workshops, visits and seminars and bring these back to branch, ensuring everyone benefits.

We are really passionate about cruise and excited about the future. There's never been a better time to cruise, as there really is something for everyone.

The internet has created revolutionary changes in tourism, with the trend for customers using it as a research tool. However, more people are wanting advice, recommendations and opinions on where to go and what to do while away, whether that be in the UK or abroad.

This is the role of a travel agent – to enhance the whole experience that we give to our potential and existing clients so we excite and delight them, ensuring that customers come into our Hays Travel branches time and time again to book their luxury, family or cruise holiday. 📍



Hays Travel is not just about its branches – it has a training academy

”

In conversation with...

TUI River Cruises

In March TUI will celebrate the launch of its dedicated river cruise ships. **Gary Peters** joins general manager Abi Devaney to discover how it intends to stand out from the competition

Picture the scene. This is TUI headquarters – the hustle and bustle of approximately 2,000 people working across a range of departments. In one small corner, eight people are keeping one eye on a countdown clock, ticking ever closer to a very special date.

The date – 23 March – is the official launch day for TUI River Cruises; the day when plans become reality, as the new river line unveils its three 155-passenger ships – *TUI Isla*, *TUI Skyla* and *TUI Maya*, in Amsterdam.

The date is a couple of months away [at the time of writing] but the TUI team is painfully aware that time flies. “The team will probably say I’m the least busy, here having coffee, talking about our product,” says TUI River Cruises’ general manager, Abi Devaney. “We say internally we’re like a start-up in a great, big business.”



“We are definitely the new kids on the block. Our product is based on freedom and choice”

ABI DEVANEY



Budapest is bisected by the Danube, one of TUI’s destinations

That – being part of the TUI Group – has its advantages, whether it’s about resources or using existing experience from the Marella ocean brand. However, Devaney and her colleagues are not resting on their laurels.

“River felt like a natural fit for us and we believe it has really broad appeal,” she says. “The most obvious challenge for a new business is getting the name out there.

“For us it’s about building on the right foundations and growing sustainably. We need to make sure we’re really connected with the industry so that if challenges come up we tackle them as a whole industry.”

The river family

Despite a desire to work collaboratively with other river lines, TUI will need to differentiate its offering and compete in what is a fast-growing sector of cruise.

This is not lost on Devaney: “Well, we are definitely the new kids on the block

– that’s what I hear all the time. For us, our whole product proposition is around freedom and choice – that’s our concept. Our flagship idea is the £120 excursion credit package, which is included in the price of the holiday. This allows guests to pick and choose what they want to do in each destination, whether that’s exploring on their own or choosing from a range of excursions we have on offer. Rather than other lines that say, ‘excursions are included, but this is the one you go on each day’, we want to give guests the option.”

However, freedom of choice is much broader than that, as Devaney explains. “It’s about being able to select an individual cabin rather than just the cabin type, for example.

“We’re launching with full-board plus as standard, so drinks are included with meals. But if all-inclusive is important, guests can upgrade for a small fee.”



The Dutch Delights itinerary includes the historic wonders of Utrecht

An explorer mindset

As Devaney admits, river cruising “does lean towards a more mature customer”, but the line is trying to broaden appeal to what it calls guests with an “explorer mindset”. That, says Devaney, could be defined as a guest exploring a destination on their own, taking a TUI excursion or simply enjoying the views from the top deck on a sun lounger.

An important note is that TUI River Cruises is an adults-only proposition. So, for now, no children. “We made that decision at the beginning,” explains Devaney. “They are fairly small ships and the laid-back vibe that we want could be a bit disrupted by having little ones on.”

Is the line not missing out on the burgeoning multi-gen market, however? Her reply is short and sweet: “For the moment, with a new product, we’re focusing on adults and maybe we will think about that in the future.”

There’s a similar reply when it comes to themed itineraries – a particular favourite on the Marella ocean cruises – and Devaney does not rule out the potential of special occasion voyages at some point in the future, either.



TUI Maya and her sisters will be unveiled in March

European adventures

As for the here and now – or, at least come March and throughout this year – TUI River Cruises will be taking guests along some of Europe’s finest rivers, with tours on the likes of the Danube, Rhine, Moselle, and Dutch and Belgian waterways on offer.

The seven-night Rhine Gems cruise on *TUI Isla*, for example, starts at £1,099pp, and calls at Koblenz, Mainz and Mannheim, among others, while the Dutch Delights trip, from £1,199pp, also on *TUI Isla*, visits Utrecht, Antwerp, Rotterdam and more.

“European river cruising is our core,” says Devaney. “The Eastern Danube itineraries are becoming increasingly popular and feature some of the hidden gems. But there’s always popularity for

what might be called the big hitters. We have a 14-night itinerary that takes guests from Amsterdam to Budapest and that is an all-star itinerary.”

In short, there’s plenty for the trade to get its teeth into, including the opportunity to see the ships in the flesh later this year. “The trade is really excited,” adds Devaney. “We’ve been busy getting all the information ready, in terms of launch packs, training and so on.

“Of course we want to get agents on to our ships. As part of our launch plans we are running three educational sailings. We’re still working on invite lists for that, and later on in the season we hope to get more people on.”

For now, attention is firmly fixed on the March launch. The clock is ticking. 🕒

Mainz offers Rhine visitors a glimpse of Germany’s past





1

Throwback to the past

Guests can roll back the years and indulge in a large dollop of nostalgia on the Throwback cruise, sailing on Royal Caribbean's *Anthem of the Seas*. The 2020 cruise, departing Southampton on 1 October, will feature performances from the likes of Marc Almond, Martin Kemp, The Jacksons and more. Guests will dock in Cherbourg before returning to the UK, but this itinerary is all about the on-board entertainment and theme nights. Visit floatingfestivals.co.uk for more information on pricing.

6

OF THE BEST

Music cruises

Itineraries based on a musical genre or specific band have grown in popularity in recent years, as **Gary Peters** discovers

Magical Danube

Tauck's Musical Magic Along The Blue Danube itinerary promises guests the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the likes of Mozart, Beethoven, Bartók, Schubert, Liszt, Strauss and more, on a range of excursions to some of the Danube's greatest cities throughout Austria, Hungary, Germany, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The cruise also includes Tauck's own music scholars, who hold interactive workshops and seminars to enrich the experience. Prices for the 12-day voyage start at £4,770pp, with departure dates in May, June and July 2020.

3 Sapphire's farewell

Saga's Musical Norway cruise, departing 11 April 2020, will be extra special this year as it's *Saga Sapphire's* last foray to the Norwegian fjords before it leaves the fleet. The ship will spend a day cruising along the UNESCO-listed Geirangerfjord and visit the Norwegian Fjord Centre. As for the music, guests will be able to listen to the sound of the Hardanger fiddle, explore a cavernous old copper mine for a special performance, or enjoy live jazz performances. Prices start from £1,713pp.



4

4 Rock 'n' roll all night

One of the biggest adventures at sea takes place from 30 October to 4 November 2020 as the band

KISS joins guests on *Norwegian Pearl* for the aptly named KISS Kruise. The itinerary, which has been running since 2011, is one of the biggest parties at sea, featuring performances from the band and other related activities. Visit thekisskruise.com/presale/ for more information on pricing.

5 A classic voyage

Departing 17 October 2020, Silversea's 12-day Barcelona to Athens cruise on *Silver Spirit* is ideal for culture vultures, as it includes an exclusive performance by the Accademia Teatro alla Scala, as well as lectures and interview opportunities with the performers. The cruise calls at Porto Mahon, Spain, Cagliari, Mykonos Island and more. Prices start from £4,140pp.

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6 Jazz time

In operation since 2004, the Smooth Jazz Cruise has hosted close to 50,000 passengers since its inception. The seven-day 2021 sailings, hosted by US jazz legends Marcus Miller, famous as a composer and bass guitarist, and saxophonist Boney James, depart Miami on 30 January and 6 February, on Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Infinity*. Next year will also include for the first time ports of call in Aruba and Curacao. Guests will be treated to a number of live performances, as well as seminars and Q&A sessions. Prices for an inside stateroom start from approximately £2,100pp. ①

6





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Win at selling

The Mediterranean

It's a classic destination that has wowed guests for decades. Here, Marella Cruises' head of trading and planning, **Neil Duncan**, explains why it remains a firm favourite for cruisers



“In all areas of the Med, Marella offers pre and post-cruise hotel stays”

The Western part of the Med is much more established and of course offers such well-known destinations as Spain, France and Greece, which are all very popular with holidaymakers and have relatively short flight times, all under three hours.

Destinations that are recognised as hotspots can be incorporated into a seven-night itinerary, so cruisers can visit all their desired locations during one holiday, which is an additional plus.

The Western Med is also a great option for first-time cruisers and families, as there is something on offer for everyone. Marella Cruises offers seven-night cruises from Naples and Palma that cover most of the Western Mediterranean area. There are also flights from more than 20 UK airports.

In addition to the conventional cruising option, Marella has pre and post-cruise hotel stays available in TUI resorts in both Palma and Naples, giving guests who want to try a cruise but also experience a traditional beach holiday the best of both worlds.

Eastern Med and Adriatic

This area is growing more popular, particularly the Greek Islands and Croatia. The variety of destinations available is huge and includes Montenegro, Eastern Italy, Turkey and Cyprus, to name just a few. Offering the Eastern Med is a great opportunity for agents to target regular cruisers who are looking for something different or a bit more adventure and culture.

Marella Cruises offers a seven-night Israel cruise from Cyprus, including an overnight stay in Ashdod, Israel, allowing

Selling TIPS

Plenty of destinations for clients to visit

Culture at every corner, with ancient civilisations a high point and a draw for everyone

The added benefit of warm sunshine, generally all through the year from May to October

customers to visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Dead Sea. As with the Western Med, Marella also has the option for pre and post-cruise hotel stays in TUI resorts in Paphos, Dubrovnik, Corfu and Naples. 📍



Palma can be the starting point for Marella tours to the Western Med



James Scott

UK & Ireland business
development manager
OCEANIA CRUISES

Why is your cruise line the best?

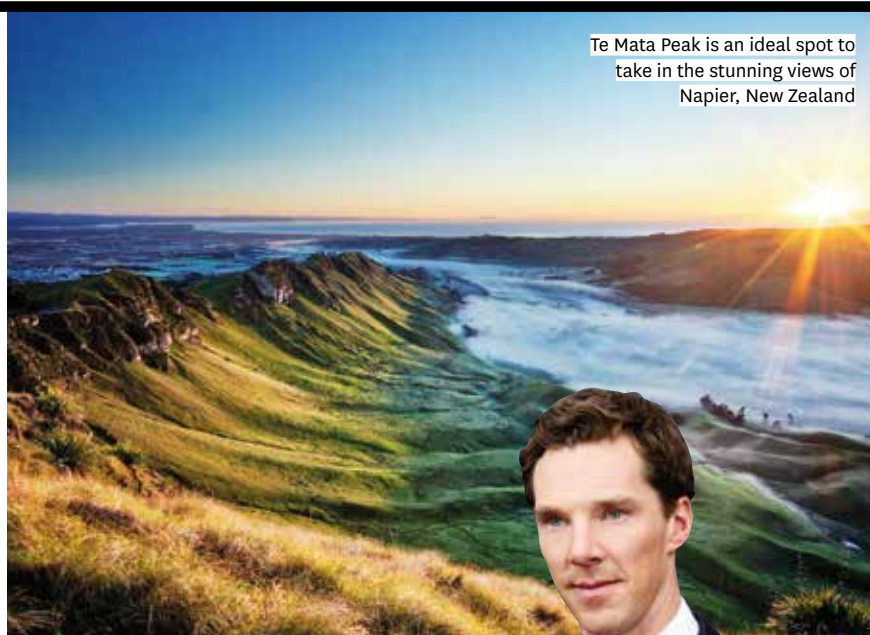
Oceania Cruises is the world's leading culinary and destination-focused cruise line. Our six intimate and luxurious ships, carrying only 684 or 1,250 guests, offer an unrivalled holiday experience, featuring the finest cuisine at sea.

Our voyages call at more than 450 ports all around the world, in Europe, Alaska, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, New England/Canada, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Panama Canal, Tahiti and the South Pacific; not forgetting our incredible 180-day Around the World cruises.

However, we are not satisfied with just that coverage. Our entire fleet is going through an extensive re-inspiration project, called OceaniaNEXT. This initiative will elevate every facet of the Oceania guest experience, from new dining opportunities and reimagined menus to the dramatic re-inspiration of our six ships.

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

I'd say Benedict Cumberbatch. He is elegant, sophisticated and suave, all characteristics that resonate with Oceania Cruises. Benedict Cumberbatch is, of course, a fantastic actor, so he's able to adapt to different characters, as we are adapting our business and ships.



Te Mata Peak is an ideal spot to take in the stunning views of Napier, New Zealand

How long have you worked for your cruise line?

I have worked for Oceania Cruises for two months. I moved to the line from our sister brand, Norwegian Cruise Line.

What's the funniest thing you've ever been asked about cruising?

I was once asked if stateroom portholes are fully submerged underwater for the entirety of a cruise – actually, how amazing would that be?

Which is your favourite ship in the fleet and why?

I don't have a favourite ship in the fleet, because I love them all equally. However, if I had to choose between the Oceania-class and Regatta-class ships, I would choose Regatta, mainly because of the extensive re-inspiration project and the complete transformation of these exquisite ships.

Which port would you prefer to disembark at, and what would you do there?

I think it would have to be Napier, New Zealand. I have family there, so not only could I explore this fascinating place, which is famous for its art deco architecture, I could also catch up with my relatives nearby.



Suave and sophisticated – Oceania shares similarities with Benedict Cumberbatch

And in which port of call would you opt to stay on board and why?

Southampton – I am from the city, so when my cruise is over I am really back to reality once I land there.

Which cruise is on your wish-list at the moment?

I would love to go on an Alaskan cruise, and a South American Amazon itinerary would be something I'd find really intriguing and enticing, too.

If you didn't work in the industry, what do you think you would be doing instead?

I would have pursued a career in the police force, as it was always an ambition of mine growing up. However, I decided to explore a career in cruise when I left college, partly because of the advice I received from my mentor at the time. I joined the industry in 2014 and I haven't looked back since.👏

“Our intimate and luxurious ships feature the finest cuisine at sea”



The 2019 Cruise Stars winners celebrated their success in style

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Representatives from cruise lines and travel agencies travelled to the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in London to discover the winners of the 2019 Cruise Stars Awards. Organised by *Cruise Trade News*, the awards celebrate the finest talent in the sector; from PR and marketing stars to regional sales experts.

As ever the awards took on a new twist, as evidenced by the inaugural

victors of the Cruise Line Sales Team of the Year category, proudly won by Lee Surman, Stuart Pearce and Nicola Singleton, of Azamara.

After introductions by Real Response Media group editor Colette Doyle and Cruise Challenge host Peter Smith, guests heard from inspirational guest speaker and Olympic gold medalist Tim Foster MBE, who spoke on behalf of the Cruise Stars Awards charity partner, the Lord's Taverners. The charity's objective is to

give young people a sporting chance and in 2018 it provided more than one million opportunities for disadvantaged and disabled young people.

The ceremony concluded with a new award – Outstanding Contribution to the Cruise Industry – won by Carly Perkins, of Holland America Line and Seabourn. See more from the awards ceremony overleaf and follow the winners in the pages of *Cruise Trade News* throughout 2020. 



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT 1. Iain Powell, Saga 2. Chris Pitchford, RRM; Wendy Lahmich, HAL/Seabourn 3. The Viking Cruises team 4. Hayley van der Steen, Cruise & Maritime Voyages 5. James Arnold, Regent Seven Seas Cruises; Gary Peters, CTN 6. Agents enjoyed a lavish choice of food 7. Gary Anslow, Cunard; Andrew Todd, Jetline Travel; Simone Clark, Iglu 8. One of the awards 9. Colette Doyle, RRM; John Ferguson, Thorne Travel; 10. The pre-awards lunch offered more chances to catch up with colleagues 11. Peter Grant, RRM; Victoria Snelgar, Cunard; Colette Doyle, RRM 12. RRM produced the brochure for the occasion 13. Olympic rower Tim Foster MBE gave agents a view of his inspiring career



CRUISE LINE **PR & MARKETING STAR**



Helena Gale-Hasleham
Scenic & Emerald Waterways

CRUISE LINE SALES STAR



Amanda Elgie
MSC Cruises

CRUISE LINE MANAGEMENT STAR



Victoria Snelgar
Cunard

CRUISE LINE SALES TEAM **OF THE YEAR**



**Lee Surman, Stuart Pearce
& Nicola Singleton**
Azamara

TRAVEL AGENT MARKETING STAR



O'Hara
Mundy Cruising

REGIONAL TRAVEL **AGENT SALES STARS**



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Trevor Ridler
Baldwins Travel



**Midlands &
East of England**
Poppy Outram
Bolsover Cruise Club



North of England
Marion Owen
Marion Owen Travel



Wales & Southwest
Paul Cranny
Paul Cranny Travel



**Scotland &
Northern Ireland**
Lynn Guest
Cruise Beyond/Oasis Travel

NATIONAL TRAVEL **AGENT SALES STAR**



David Pettigrew
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TRAVEL AGENT **MANAGEMENT STAR**



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World Travel Holdings UK

CRUISE LINE RISING STAR



Ellis Barker
Fred Olsen Cruise Lines

TRAVEL AGENT **RISING STAR**



Karina Stott
World Travel Holdings UK

OVERALL CRUISE **LINE STAR**



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Winning streak

In this regular series of articles, we profile the winners of last year's Cruise Stars Awards



Helena Gale-Hasleham

Senior Trade
Marketing Executive
SCENIC & EMERALD WATERWAYS

How did you feel about winning the 2019 cruise line PR & marketing star award?

It was such a fantastic feeling hearing my name read out. I really wasn't expecting it, but I was very proud to let my team know I had won.

What do you think were the main factors that contributed to your win?

It has been a busy year for Scenic & Emerald Waterways, with new ships setting sail and products being launched. This has given me a great opportunity to work on some really exciting marketing

and PR plans. I am passionate about working for Scenic & Emerald Waterways and the cruise industry, which I hope came across.

What tips can you pass on to others in your position to help them be successful in their career?

My main tip is to get out of the office every so often to see the travel agents who you are supporting with marketing. Working on trade marketing, I put together the collateral and merchandise for our regional sales managers for their store visits and events. It's really helped recently to join the sales managers at events to see how these are used and also hear what agents would prefer going forward.

What has been your best experience in the cruise industry so far?

I hosted a fam trip in October 2019, which is definitely one of the highlights of my time in the cruise industry. The trip was great fun and getting to experience an e-bike ride in Vienna, a classical concert at a private estate and the beautiful riverside views with a glass of prosecco on the sun deck gave me a great understanding about why river cruising is so popular.

What innovations would you like to see being introduced in the cruise industry?

Sustainability has been a big focus over the past year, as guests and the media

have become more interested in the environment, and it will be even more of a priority for us next year. It's been really interesting learning about how we've been removing single-use plastics on board and reducing waste. It would be great to see more cruise lines embracing this.

What would be your dream cruise destination?

It would have to be Antarctica. *Scenic Eclipse*, our ultra-luxury discovery yacht, is currently sailing there, and the photos and videos from guests and the staff have been incredible. The wildlife and the icescapes are so different from anywhere I have been. I'm sure it would be an amazing place to visit.

What on-board amenity do you enjoy the most?

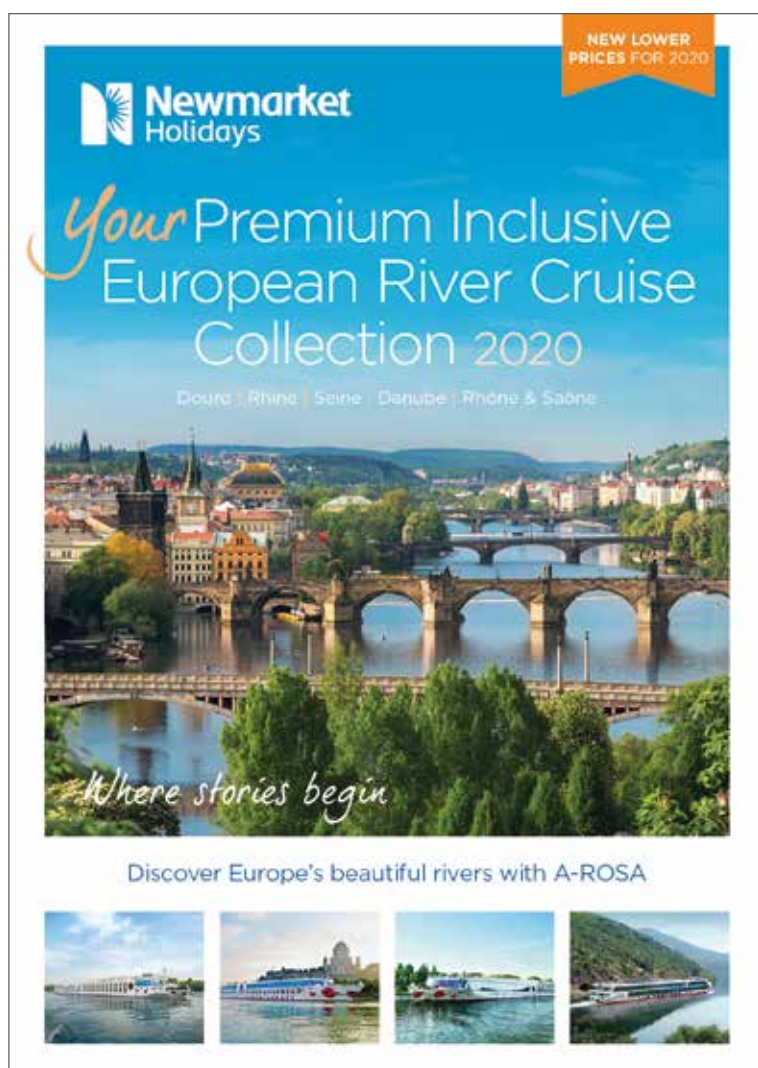
It has to be the on-board swimming pool on Emerald Star-Ships. The pool has floor-to-ceiling windows and I found it was slightly surreal, swimming in a pool on the river. It also transforms into a cinema at night.

How do you see your career in the cruise industry progressing?

I love working in travel. It really makes a difference being able to promote a product I enjoy and am passionate about. I hope to stay in the industry, working with travel agents and hopefully progressing to trade marketing manager in the near future. 📌

“Beautiful views with a glass of prosecco on the sun deck gave me great insight into river cruising”

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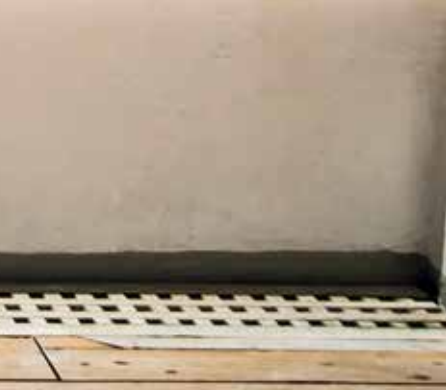
Lines such as Fred Olsen are working hard to make solo passengers welcome

Sailing Solo



Clients who set sail on an ocean or river cruise as a single traveller certainly won't be alone.

Jeannine Williamson reports



Wildfoot Travel arranges cabin-sharing, mixing carefully selected solos

Cruising is one of the best holidays for solo travellers, offering a safe environment to sail to any part of the globe alongside like-minded shipmates. With the number of single cruisers on the rise, there is far more choice when it comes to dedicated cabins, social gatherings and itineraries where single supplements are waived or reduced.

At one time, lone travellers were mainly widows or widowers and, while they still make up a large part of the market, there are now plenty of options for younger, active passengers who choose to share cabins to keep down costs.

CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer says: "Over recent years the number of people choosing to set sail on their own has risen significantly. Offering both space for solitude and opportunities for social interaction, cruise holidays are a fantastic option for solo travel.

"As such, cruise lines are breaking down the barriers that may prevent people taking a cruise by themselves with the addition of more solo cabins, while waiving single supplements and providing dedicated social events."

Friendly, small-size ships

Saga Cruises and Fred Olsen Cruise Lines both have a loyal following of mature cruisers on their smaller-sized ships, which offer excellent facilities for passengers travelling alone.

Saga's 999-passenger ships, *Spirit of Discovery* and *Spirit of Adventure* – the latter launching this summer – have 109 dedicated single cabins. They are spread throughout all stateroom grades and each has a balcony.

The line's chief operating officer, Nigel Blanks, says: "Cruising solo can be a great way to travel. Getting to see the places you've always wanted to, without having to think about what friends, partners and family would want, can be really liberating and, of course, it's the perfect chance to get some deserved me-time.

"At Saga we ensure our cruise itineraries and activities always have something really special for those choosing to travel solo, giving people the opportunity to meet and make new friends," he adds.

Also offering one of the industry's highest ratios of single cabins – including interior, ocean view and suites – Fred Olsen's fleet of four ships provide a friendly environment.

"Solo travelling can be really liberating and offers the chance for some me-time"



A quiet drink is what some singles relish on board



This year a total of 12 per cent of passengers were solo guests, an increase of 9 per cent from 2018.

"We know solo travel can be daunting, particularly for those who have never travelled on their own before," says the line's head of sales, Geoff Ridgeon. "With that in mind, we strive to deliver the best possible experience for solo travellers, ensuring that being single or unable to travel with a companion need not be a barrier to seeing the world."

"Our crew work hard to ensure that those travelling alone do not feel alone, and, once on board, solo travellers will find events designed exclusively for them," he continues.



Fred Olsen offers regular single promotions, including no-single supplement offers, and the line is so confident that solo travellers will enjoy cruising that they are covered by the Enjoyment Promise, which guarantees that if anyone finds the experience is not for them within 48 hours the line will pay for their return flight back to the UK and refund the total cost of the cruise.

There's also an increase in solo options in the river cruise segment. With Riviera Travel, for example, there's no single supplement on selected cruises and dates, and there's a solo travellers' forum for guests to interact before they travel. Riviera Travel national sales manager

ITINERARIES

Norwegian Cruise Line

● A six-night Greek Isles Venice round-trip cruise on *Norwegian Dawn* departing 9 August 2020. Prices from £871pp, cruise only. 0333 241 2319

🔗 ncl.com

G Adventures

● An 11-night *Antarctic Explorer* Ushuaia round-trip expedition cruise on *G Expedition*, departing 21 November 2020. Prices from £5,999pp sharing a triple cabin, cruise only. 020 7313 6953

🔗 gadventures.com

Saga

● A seven-night Norwegian Canvas Dover round-trip cruise on *Spirit of Adventure*, departing 21 September 2020. Prices from £2,938pp, including chauffeur service up to 250 miles. 0800 074 8021

🔗 sagaagents.co.uk



G Adventures caters for singles on its 134-guest *G Expedition*

UK & Australia Thomas Morgan says: "Our solo offering is ever increasing, with Rivera Travel offering more dedicated solo departures in 2020 than ever before. We offer some no-single-supplement cabins on all our river cruises."

Cool cruises

In 2010 Norwegian Cruise Line pioneered contemporary solo cruising, building staterooms and lounge areas specifically for single cruisers. Some ships host pub crawls and there's always a Friends of Dorothy happy hour for LGBTQ+ guests. There are also lower single supplements for regular staterooms on some sailings. For luxe-loving clients, Crystal Cruises

offers some of the lowest supplements for singles to stay in double occupancy cabins, starting at 30 per cent as standard and dipping as low as 10 per cent on selected sailings. There are ambassador hosts on every cruise and solo passengers can opt to join hosted tables to meet new friends.

Fellow upmarket brand Silversea also welcomes solos, with single supplements starting at just 10 per cent above Silver Privilege Fares. Every voyage includes a champagne welcome reception and a daily solo travellers' get-together for meeting and mingling with other guests.

For clients who are younger, active and adventurous, wildlife cruise and expedition specialist Wildfoot Travel has a range of itineraries with no single supplements if solo cruisers are willing to share a cabin with a carefully selected same-sex passenger. A similar policy is adopted by G Adventures on its 134-passenger *G Expedition*, where the small-ship atmosphere and communal dining make it easy to meet new people.

Whatever the final choice, there are plenty of welcoming lines for clients looking to set sail by themselves.❶

Selling TIPS

Lines are reducing single supplements

• Solo-friendly itineraries to suit all ages

• Dedicated single cabins across all categories

• A cruise offers one of the safest environments for single travellers

• The chance to make new friends

"Crew work hard to ensure that those travelling solo do not feel alone"

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The path less travelled

Exotic rivers offer a world of adventure for passengers in search of something different.

Jeannine Williamson reports



Waking up to the sounds of a rainforest, spotting rare creatures, joining local villagers as they go about their daily lives and touring ancient, incense-filled temples are among the many evocative experiences that can be found on exotic river cruises.

Once clients have cruised popular European routes, such as the Rhine and Danube, they will be looking for something different to satisfy their wanderlust, and there are plenty of exciting waterways waiting to be discovered elsewhere.

These include the holy Ganges and Brahmaputra, which provide an incredible insight into Indian culture; the wilder Upper Mekong flowing through little-known Laos; the remote Chindwin, a tributary of the Irrawaddy in Myanmar,

formerly Burma; the mighty Amazon, South America's largest river, and the Red River, which rises in China and flows through northern Vietnam.

"River cruises in exotic destinations such as Asia and South America take guests to some of the most incredible and unique places on earth," explains CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer.

"These long-haul river destinations are seeing the biggest growth, particular in Asia, with the Mekong taking the top spot as the most popular river outside Europe. When selling these types of cruises, it would be a missed opportunity not to encourage clients to add on a pre or post-cruise stay."

New ships and cruises

To meet growing demand lines are adding new ships and itineraries. A newcomer to the UK trade market is Lotus Cruises, one of the Mekong's

leading luxury river cruise lines, working with Plateau International. Facilities on the line's 34-suite *RV Mekong Jewel*, launching this month (January) and sailing between Siem Reap and Ho Chi Minh City, include a swimming pool, spa, hair salon and nail bar.

Lotus recently announced the launch of a boutique 14-cabin ship, *RV Mekong Muse*, which will offer journeys on the Upper Mekong from October 2021. The vessel will sail 10-night itineraries between the Laotian capital, Vientiane, and Chiang Saen, and five-night sailings from Vientiane to UNESCO-listed Luang Prabang or between Chiang Saen and Luang Prabang.

Plateau International is also the global sales and marketing agency for India specialist Heritage River Journeys. In February 2020 the 18-cabin *Gangas Vilas* will join the line's existing fleet – *Bengal Ganga*, *Ganges Voyager* and *Ganges*

Voyager II – to sail on seven to 15-day itineraries on the River Hooghly and Ganges, taking in Varanasi, the spiritual capital of India. In a notable break from traditional colonial-style vessels, *Gangas Vilas* will feature contemporary décor.

Plateau International founder and managing director Marco Rosa says: “We are seeing a significant rise in demand for exotic river cruises among both seasoned cruise customers and those who are new to cruising.

“Our advice to agents selling exotic river cruises in Asia is to target experienced cruise customers as well as clients who may not be cruise fans but who have a keen sense of adventure and who may have visited Asia before and developed a passion for the region.”

Small-ship line Pandaw, sold through Fred River Cruises, recently built the 14-stateroom *Kanee Pandaw*, the 20th vessel in the fleet. The ship will sail on the mainstream Irrawaddy between Yangon and Mandalay as well as the out-of-the-way rivers of Upper Myanmar.

Cultural experiences

The company’s head of river cruises, Sukie Rapal, explains: “Pandaw has been a favourite in the UK market and we are able to provide a full package in pounds. Some agents already sold Pandaw and we have been able to give them marketing support to grow. We’ve also given other agents something a bit different to sell.

“[The] Mekong, Irrawaddy, Red River, Ganges and Brahmaputra are all popular.”

There is also Far Horizon Tours, which recently became the first company to



Pandaw's RV Kalay sails the Chindwin in Myanmar

Selling TIPS

The chance to explore remote areas often only accessible by boat

Wealth of bird and wildlife spotting opportunities

Authentic and impromptu meetings with locals on village walks

Small ships provide a real sense of adventure

Meals focused on local cuisine

offer week-long sailings on the Kerala backwaters on the nine-cabin *Vaikundam*, the largest vessel in the region. Until now, only one to three-night sailings have been available on small houseboats.

For clients who want to take a walk on the wild side, CroisiEurope offers South African itineraries including a four-day cruise on Lake Kariba and a four-day stay in the line’s own luxury lodge near Chobe National Park overlooking the Zambezi, with the option of a helicopter ride over Victoria Falls. This spring the 16-passenger CroisiEurope ship *Zimbabwean Dream* will join the line’s *African Dream* to double capacity on this spectacular sailing in a region that clients are clamouring to discover. ❶

Sell it

CroisiEurope has an eight-night Southern Africa: Travel to the Ends of the Earth cruise and land-stay itinerary on *Zimbabwean Dream*, departing 3 November 2020, from £4,604pp, including domestic flights. 020 8328 1281
croisieurope.co.uk

Far Horizon Tours’ 11-night Dubai & Brahmaputra Cruise departs 23 April 2020, from £3,069pp, including three nights’ B&B accommodation in Dubai and cruise on *MV Mahabaahu*, excluding flights. 0800 0213 172
fredrivercruises.co.uk

Lotus Cruises has a 10-night Upper Mekong cruise on *RV Mekong Muse*, departing 29 September 2022. Prices from approximately £2,900pp, cruise only.
lotuscruises.com



Sacred dances by the monks can be experienced on the banks of the Brahmaputra



Epic Encore

Olivia Sharpe joins Norwegian Cruise Line
for the launch of the line's fourth and final
Breakaway-Plus ship

With more and more ships being built every year, as a cruise line it can sometimes be difficult to stay ahead of the curve. From gourmet cuisine and luxurious spas to top-notch entertainment and high-tech features, lines are going above and beyond to deliver something different at sea. And passengers can certainly expect something unique on board Norwegian Cruise Line's new ship, *Norwegian Encore*.

The dazzling, 3,998-passenger, 169,116-ton vessel is the fourth and final ship in the line's Breakaway-Plus class and cost nearly \$1 billion to build. She has many similar features to her sister ships, *Escape*, *Joy* and *Bliss*, but with the addition of some clever nuances and subtle enhancements.

The cruise line has taken its renowned standout features to a new level with *Encore*, featuring the world's longest race track at sea, at 1,100ft, and the largest outdoor laser tag arena at nearly 10,000sq ft, with the addition of augmented reality elements.

Something for everyone

Stepping aboard, it is clear that no expense has been spared on the ship's interiors. As you wander through the public spaces, the overall feel is that of contemporary luxury, featuring lavish furnishings and an elegant and light colour palette punctuated with statement artwork. There's also an on-board gallery with even more art on show.

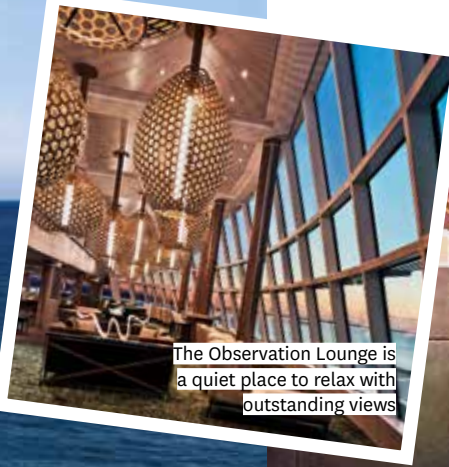
One particularly impressive and dramatic feature is a grand chandelier in the Atrium that changes colour all the time and hangs above the glass staircase that leads from deck six to deck nine.

Art has always played an important role on NCL's ships and this is highlighted by *Norwegian Encore*'s exterior, which continues the line's tradition of featuring iconic hull art.

On this occasion, the vibrant, abstract design was the work of Spanish artist Eduardo Arranz-Bravo, who was commissioned to create a piece that reflected the dynamic experience guests will have on board.

Summing up the overall aesthetic, NCL UK and Ireland managing director Eamonn Ferrin says: "It has a luxurious ambience about it, but it's very varied. Every area has a different aesthetic. It's got something for everyone."

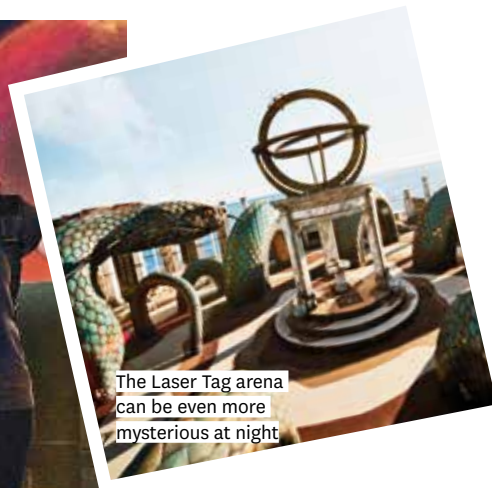
This all ties in to NCL's Freestyle concept, which allows passengers to choose what they want to do rather than have their schedule and itinerary mapped out for them. This is strongly demonstrated by the number of drinking



The Observation Lounge is a quiet place to relax with outstanding views



Virtual reality fans are catered for in the Galaxy Pavilion



The Laser Tag arena can be even more mysterious at night

Selling TIPS

- A ship designed to suit all ages
- Great entertainment options for families
- Cabins designed specifically for solo passengers
- VR experiences offer something new

and dining venues on the vessel – there are 29 in total, each of them offering something slightly different.

Divine dining

Of the complimentary dining venues, there's The Local, serving up classic pub grub, or The Taste, which majors in world cuisine. The Starbucks is a novelty, allowing guests to pick up a much-needed morning coffee and snack without having to do a more formal dining experience. There's also the Manhattan Room, again with its own edge.

When it comes to the extra-cost venues, a special mention has to be given to Onda by Scarpetta, a modern Italian eatery that is a new venue for NCL.

The sleek and modern décor, featuring coppery-red banquette seating, contemporary gold light features and table-cloth-free dining tables, provides the perfect backdrop for the cuisine.

The concept of Onda is all about sharing, so guests can try a little bit from the whole menu (which, for those prone to food envy, is ideal).

The outdoor laser tag arena is an exciting place to explore, but guests may prefer to visit at night when the lost-city-of-Atlantis-themed layout provides an added layer of mystique.

There's also the Galaxy Pavilion, which features immersive VR experiences and thrilling simulator rides. The grand finale of the entertainment repertoire is the multi award-winning Broadway musical *Kinky Boots*, which makes its ocean-going

debut at the Encore Theatre. While *Kinky Boots* has been given the most press and is undoubtedly a great performance, it is The Choir of Man that's the stand-out show for me – a truly rousing performance.

Guests can even watch 'The Beatles', an excellent tribute band, performing songs from many eras of the band every night at the Cavern Club.

For passengers looking to relax and unwind, the ship has plenty of intimate spaces and quiet corners, my favourite being the Observation Lounge.

And let us not forget the Mandara spa. The serene and tranquil wellness area has a thermal suite, vitality pool, salt room, snow room and a host of treatments. Encore also boasts a beauty salon and fitness centre, offering a range of high-intensity classes, Pilates and ocean-view yoga.

Last but not least, there are the cabins. The ship features a variety of accommodation options to suit all demographics, from balcony suites to family-sized and solo cabins. My mini balcony suite is large and very comfortable, featuring a double bed, small seating area, vanity table and spacious bathroom.

With its world-class entertainment, facilities and cuisine catering for all tastes, I have no doubt that *Encore* will be a hit among adults and children alike. No doubt they'll all want to return again and again. 📌

Details

- Norwegian Cruise Line's five-day Western Caribbean cruise on *Norwegian Encore* departs February 24 2021. Prices from £561pp.



Norwegian Encore takes *Kinky Boots* to the next level

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Paul Gauguin
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DESTINATION SPECIAL

A scenic land

Scenic has unveiled its 2020/22 Antarctica and the Americas brochure, featuring itineraries on *Scenic Eclipse* and new escorted land journeys.

The 2020 land elements will offer intimate and authentic experiences, according to the line, travelling with a maximum of 20 guests and expert tour directors. Examples include Peru's Machu Picchu, Iguazú Falls and the landscapes of Patagonia.

As for the cruising element, a 16-day Antarctica itinerary offers sightseeing opportunities, Zodiac rides and a helicopter ride for even more spectacular views. Prices from £10,781pp, departing 15 February 2022.

For more information visit

📍 scenic.co.uk



It's all about the views on the new *Scenic Eclipse* ventures in Antarctica



44 Hotlist

Uniworld's new Amazon adventure, and where clients will be looking to go in the rest of the world this year

46 Australia & New Zealand

Recovery from natural disasters is first on the region's list for 2020, and tourism will help it get there



HOTLIST

All the latest updates on the world's most exciting ports of call



Uniworld is taking its boutique experience down the River Amazon

Cruising the Amazon

Uniworld will sail in South America for the first time in September 2020.

The luxury river cruise line has announced two itineraries on the Peruvian Amazon aboard the *Aria Amazon*, offering “the perfect combination of luxury, active adventure and comfort”, according to the line’s president & CEO, Ellen Bettridge. Itineraries include the 15-day Peruvian

Amazon and Machu Picchu Exploration, which includes a land portion in Lima at a five-star hotel, followed by a seven-night cruise through the Amazon rainforest.

There is also an 11-day Peruvian Rivers and Rainforest Discovery trip, in Lima and the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve.

Prices start at £11,799pp, including return flights and a one-way free business class upgrade, from 23 September 2020.

Ocean Cay open for business

M

SC Cruises’ new private island getaway is now welcoming guests.

Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, in the Bahamas, has been transformed from an industrial sand excavation site into one of the line’s hottest ports of call.

MSC Cruises executive chairman Pierfrancesco Vago said: “Ocean Cay is founded on a deep commitment to

ecological principles – beliefs that shape everything from how venues are built and how the island is run to the kinds of activities featured on the island.

“Ocean Cay is not just a holiday island, it is a unique marine reserve where people and nature thrive in harmony.”

MSC Cruises also plans a conservation and coral research centre on the island.



A sand excavation site has been transformed into a private venue



Cartagena city offers a way in to the Caribbean coast

From Cartagena to Panama

Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic will sail from Cartagena in Colombia to Panama City as part of an eight-day cruise.

The itinerary – Panama & Colombia: Exploring the Caribbean Coast – will depart on four dates during October 2020. Guests will

experience the diverse heritage of a number of cities and remote towns, such as Colombia's Santa Cruz de Lorica, as well as the Panamanian archipelago of Guna Yala.

Prices start from approximately £4,500pp for a category one cabin on *National Geographic Quest*.



Turtles and their fellow marine creatures are on view off the Reef

Explore the Great Barrier Reef

Coral Expeditions is giving guests the chance to experience the Great Barrier Reef as part of a series of expeditions starting from June 2021 and sailing on *Coral Discoverer*.

New destinations include the Daintree Rainforest, Hope Island and remote Osprey Reef, an area beyond the continental shelf, rising 2,000 metres above the seabed.

The line's commercial director, Jeff Gillies, explained: "Our new seven-night expeditions, Outerknown Adventures on the Great Barrier Reef, focus on the lesser-seen outer reefs and islands of the northern region and will offer guests from across the globe an authentic and immersive experience like no other."

Highlights include:

- Educational and nature walks at Cooktown, Queensland
- The chance to see marine species of the Great Barrier Reef
- Seven Queensland sunsets
- A turtle rehabilitation centre

Coral Discoverer, which carries up to 72 guests, is built for expedition cruising with a shallow draft, allowing access to remote locations.



Egypt's treasures are all to see on the new CroisiEurope sailings

Nile on the map

CroisiEurope has announced a number of Nile cruises, sailing from February 2020 aboard the *Steigenberger Royale*.

The eight-day itinerary from Luxor will call at Edfu, Aswan, Kom Obo and Abu Simbel. There are a number of departures between February and December 2020, with cruise-only prices starting from £1,364pp.

Highlights include:

- Visits to the sites of Upper Egypt

- An optional visit to the Sound & Light Show at the Karnak Temple Complex
- An optional trip to the temples at Abu Simbel
- A tuk-tuk ride through the heart of local villages

CroisiEurope's 106-guest vessel *Steigenberger Royale* features a restaurant serving a mix of local and international cuisine, a large lounge and bar, a panoramic lounge and a sun deck with a pool.



Bouncing back

The people of Australia and New Zealand are going through hard times. But these destinations will emerge from their difficulties – and tourism will be at the heart of that recovery. **Heidi Fuller-Love** reports



New Zealand is famed for its glorious landscapes

The cosmopolitan city of Sydney has hundreds of cultural attractions



The record-breaking temperatures in Australia and New Zealand have caused significant damage and upset for all in the region. However, this is a region full of wonder, and it is that wonder and the world-class experiences on offer, as well as the support of the travel trade, that will see it emerge from its current situation. Australia's combination of beaches, adventure and sophisticated city experience makes for a brilliant cruise pairing with the twin islands of New Zealand, which were described in a recent ABTA report as "an alluring mix of Polynesia and Europe".

"As a recognised top destination for 2020 travel, Australia and New Zealand cruises attract travellers looking for less frequented areas with an innovative culinary scene, abundant cultural experiences and immersive attractions," says Seabourn senior vice-president of global sales and marketing Chris Austin.

"The region has so much to offer that, though it's a longer journey to get there, the resulting experience is really worth it."

Size and style

The chance to explore the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef system, is just one of the highlights. Other natural wonders that can be discovered during shore excursions include the sacred sandstone monolith known as Uluru, in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, the penguins of Phillip Island near Melbourne, and Kakadu National Park in Australia's Northern Territory,

"The region has so much to offer and although the journey is longer, the resulting experience is really worth it"

which is famed for its Aboriginal rock paintings.

Silversea sales director UK, Ireland, Middle East & Africa Connie Georgiou explains: "Our Australia and New Zealand programme is very popular with baby boomers who are time rich."

From classical music concerts and other events in Sydney's iconic white-winged Opera House to exploring Melbourne's labyrinth of streets packed with artisan stores, art galleries and trendy cafes, Australia has plenty to offer culture vultures, too.

"The sheer size of the region means that there really is something for everyone, whether it's a classic cruise with overnights in iconic cities such as Sydney and Melbourne and trips to the stunning Great Barrier Reef, or a longer cruise that includes New Zealand's stunning Lord of the Ring landscapes," adds Georgiou.

A tale of two islands

Most of the major lines that run cruises out of Australia also have its near neighbour New Zealand on their itineraries for 2020.

ITINERARIES

Silversea:

SUB ANTARCTICA

● Silversea's 14-day New Zealand Sub Antarctica cruise departs Dunedin on 21 December 2020, calling at Stewart Island, Macquarie Island, Campbell Island, Enderby & Auckland Islands, and Ulva Island. Prices from £10,980pp for an Adventurer suite.

Celebrity Cruises:

AROUND THE SOUNDS

● Celebrity Cruises' 12-night Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand cruise departs Sydney on 29 October 2020, calling at Hobart, Milford Sound, Doubtful Sound, Dusky Sound, Dunedin, Akaroa, Wellington and Picton. Prices from £1,359pp for an inside cabin.

Princess Cruises:

LORD OF THE RINGS

● Princess Cruises' 14-day New Zealand cruise departs from Brisbane on 25 January 2021, calling at Auckland, Tauranga, Napier, Wellington, Akaroa, Dunedin and Fiordland National Park. Prices from £1,244pp for an interior cabin.

Royal Caribbean:

ICONIC SIGHTS

● Royal Caribbean's five-night Tasmania itinerary departs Sydney on 12 December 2020, calling at Port Arthur and Hobart. Prices from £451pp for an interior cabin.

Viking Cruises:

CULTURE VOYAGE

● Viking's 15-day Auckland to Sydney cruise departs Auckland on 23 December 2020, calling at Rotorua, Napier, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Tasmania, Melbourne and Sydney. Prices from £6,790pp for a Veranda suite.

Azamara:

DEEP DIVE

● Azamara's 18-night Australia Intensive Voyage departs Sydney on 23 February 2021, calling at Brisbane, Mooloolaba, Airlie beach, Cairns, Darwin, Benoa and Singapore. Prices from £4,660pp for an inside cabin.



From Auckland city's epic Sky Tower to sensational reef diving, New Zealand has it all

Highlights in the land of the friendly Kiwis – which is actually two large islands separated by the Cook Strait – include Wellington, capital of North Island, which is said to have more bars and restaurants per capita than New York. Here passengers can enjoy wandering along the waterfront, or riding in the city's historic cable car to appreciate the mesmerising views from Kelburn Lookout.

Austin adds: "A cruise is a great gateway to exciting experiences such as exploring the Rotorua Geothermal Wonderland, joining a Seal Coast Safari in Wellington, or experiencing a vintage steam train, wine and wildlife excursion."

Although North Island has the finest white sand beaches, the larger South Island has the Marlborough Sounds, a vast region of coves and waterways, where it's possible to swim with bottlenose dolphins, fur seals and other marine residents.

"If guests are returning to New Zealand," says Georgiou, "they could also consider adding an expedition into the rarely explored Sub Antarctic region."

October to April is the busy season for Southern Hemisphere cruises, although many lines operate itineraries throughout the year.

As Cunard sales director Gary Anslow says: "Australia and New Zealand offer awe-inspiring landscapes, incredible and unique wildlife, towering mountains and stunning verdant valleys." 📍

Selling TIPS

Sell the variety

"From adventure seekers and beach dwellers to foodies and culture lovers, this region offers so many rich opportunities – there's a huge variety of experiences to offer clients," says Seabourn's Chris Austin.

Know your stuff

"This is such a vast region and there are so many different things to see and do that it's essential for agents to understand what kind of holiday a client is after," says Silversea's Connie Georgiou.

Add attractions

"Passengers should make the most of their cruise by adding on pre or post-tours. Guests should also understand that many major sites, including the Great Barrier Reef, are not accessible on larger cruise ships," says Oceania Cruises senior vice-president and managing director EMEA Bernard Carter.



Classic Mekong Tour on the brand-new Victoria Mekong Ship

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Free cabin upgrade to upper deck.

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Industry insider

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



Celebrate the good times

It was to the De Vere Cotswold Water Park that the cruise industry travelled for CLIA's annual winter bash. Guests attended the Cruise Forum event during the day, at which delegates heard from a range of speakers, including CLIA's Andy Harmer (pictured), before the party really started. Glitz and glamour were the watchwords, as ever.



Singing with Seabourn

Seabourn held their annual lunch for the cruise industry at London's acclaimed Bluebird Café in Chelsea, London. Journalists including our own Colette Doyle and *World of Cruising's* Vicky Mayer (far left and centre) and travel VIPs such as HAL/Seabourn's Carly Perkins (near left) enjoyed a three-course lunch followed by a medley of songs from some of the line's talented on-board singers.

Brekkie with Royal

Press gathered at the cruise-appropriate 12th Knot rooftop bar at Sea Containers' London HQ in Waterloo for breakfast with Royal Caribbean to hear about what the cruise line has got planned for Wave 2020. The action-packed line-up includes a new three-part documentary on Channel 4 and a family-focused TV ad, as well as a flash sale. Exciting times ahead.



Training day

Cruise Trade News headed to the port of Rotterdam to see just how cruise lines train their captains and senior bridge staff. Just outside the city lies SimWave, where cruise lines can simulate their own ships' bridges, with a crew of training staff for emergency situations in realistic mock-up engine rooms. Let's just say, if there's an engine-room fire, we know what to do.



Greens snatch it

The final Cruise Challenge of the season was one to remember, as the Green team won by the finest of margins, edging out their opponents by a solitary point. The event, which helps agents learn about cruise lines in a fun, engaging way, has spent 12 months travelling the length and breadth of the country and now takes a well-earned break. Keep an eye on cruisetradenews.com for information about dates for the 2020 fixtures.





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