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TRADE NEWS

SECOND WIND

Industry maps comeback as
some ships return to action

2021 & beyond

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TO SELL TO CLIENTS

INSIDE: Seabourn on agent partnerships • How to improve product knowledge
Innovation at Portsmouth Port • Social distancing on ships



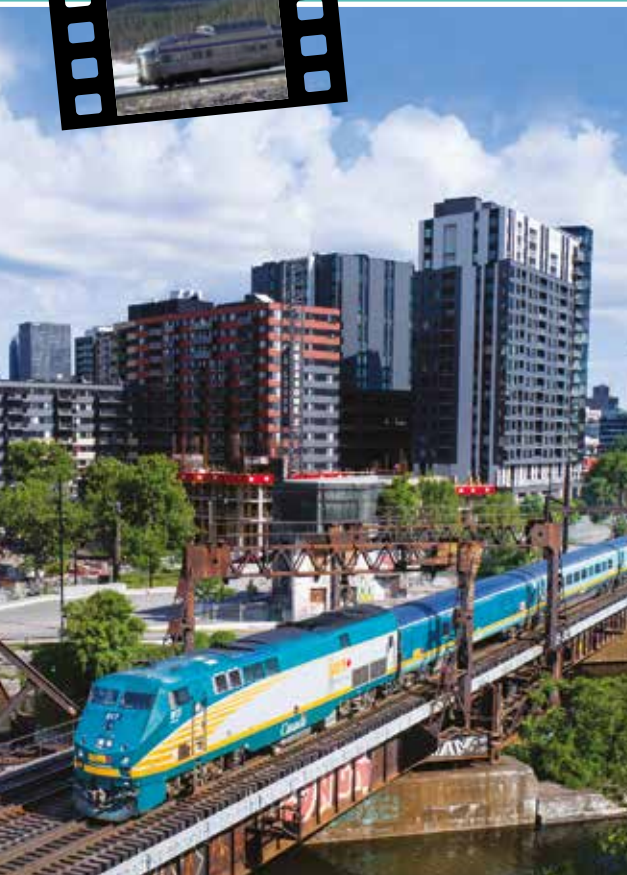
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Cruise Trade News

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the July/August issue

As I sat down to plan this edition of the magazine, with a notepad in hand and countless web pages flashing in front of my eyes, my key aim was to strike a balance between analysis of the current situation while also ensuring a tone of optimism.

After speaking to many in the industry, I have every faith that this great industry of ours will emerge from current difficulties with its head held high and optimism surging throughout.

With that in mind, we analyse some of the green shoots of recovery beginning to emerge. See pages 14/15 for a look at the cruise lines sailing again and how they have changed the on-board experience.

Our interview section features a host of industry experts discussing their recent experiences and plans for the future. Turn to page 16.

We hear from Seabourn UK & Ireland MD Lynn Narraway (*page 12*) on how the line is working with trade partners and get expert advice from SeaDream's Jos Dewing on how to improve product knowledge – see page 20. As I am sure you appreciate, changes are occurring on a regular basis, so all information is correct at the time of going to print.

I also need to mention some very sad personal news that you may have read on our website and social media channels. Our publishing director, Peter Grant, passed away in June.



Above: Thumbs up from the united (but socially distanced) A-Rosa team. More on page 14

Peter was incredibly important to all aspects of *Cruise Trade News* and Real Response Media. On a professional note, he was fundamental in pushing our brand to new heights, whether that was through our travel agent event, the Cruise Challenge, or driving innovation in our digital channels.

Personally, he was a true friend and supporter, providing guidance every step of the way.

I do hope you find the articles in this issue useful and informative. Until next time.

GARY PETERS
Editor, Cruise Trade News

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Ad bonanza recipients revealed

Our sister title *World of Cruising* has revealed the travel companies that will benefit from its Travel Recovery Grant campaign.

The grant includes £250,000, spread across 50 recipients, of free advertising and was open to cruise lines, travel agents and tourist boards.

Companies will receive a free advertising package to the value of £5,000, which can be used across print, digital and email marketing on a national basis from July through to September 2020.

The publication is supporting travel agents, cruise operators and tourist boards, all of whom have been greatly affected by the crisis and the subsequent travel restrictions that have been imposed.

Real Response Media CEO Chris Pitchford said: "We at *World of Cruising* are doing all we can to support those who have been affected by the pandemic.

"We are very proud to be offering this grant to members of the industry, as we all begin to look to the future."

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- ICE Europe
- John Galligan Travel
- Jonathan Fletcher
(Cruise Holidays UK)
- Light Blue Travel Ltd
- Mobility at Sea
- Mundy Cruising
- Nick Markham
(Travel Counsellors)
- Orbital Travel
- Paul Gauguin Cruises
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- Samoa Tourism Authority
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- Seabourn
- Silversea Cruises
- Strawberry Holidays
- Su Dillon
(Travel Counsellors)
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- Thompson Travel International
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- Variety Cruises
- WOWcruise
- Windstar Cruises
- World Travel Holdings UK
- Worlds Apart Travel
- Wroxham Travel



IN MEMORIAM

Peter Grant

In early June we were devastated to hear of the sudden death of our publishing director, Peter Grant, at the age of 52.

Peter had been with the company since September 2014 and became a director in May 2017. He was hugely instrumental in all our achievements over the years.

Peter leaves behind a wife, Jennie. They met the year before starting university and lived in Kent with his second loves, his Westie dog called Beau and a new kitten called Coco.

Messages of support from many of Peter's friends in the industry have flooded in over recent weeks, all highlighting what

a wonderful person he was and the lasting impression he made on all he met. From all of us at CTN and Real Response Media, thank you for your support.

However, since the sad news reached us, we have decided to celebrate Peter's life and to honour his legacy. Whether it be through regular Zoom quiz nights or a (virtual) drink on a Friday evening, we are staying true to Peter's philosophy – that publishing should be a fun, collaborative experience. We urge all those who knew him to do the same and raise a glass.

CTN editor Gary Peters writes:

"When I joined CTN in May 2018, it was immediately obvious that Peter was vital to the publication and wider company – and not just in job title. It was Peter's personality and nature that struck me. In many ways he was the magazine, representing it at events across the country and further afield.

"I am sure you, our friends and readers, have your own memories of Peter. I have many – particularly from our trips to conferences in Europe and countless awards evenings.

"Let's just say that Peter and I spent many late nights discussing cruise, politics and football. That we were both passionate about all three subjects did mean that these chats would go on until the late hours (sometimes we were the last people at the bar). But it was fun, and that's exactly what Peter was – a fun person, who was always on hand with an anecdote to make me smile. That's how I choose to remember him."

INDUSTRY

New line to sail in May 2021

Tradewind Voyages, a new UK-based cruise line, plans its first sailing next May.

The line will initially sail on *Golden Horizon*, the world's largest square-rigged sailing vessel. It will carry 272 passengers.

Tradewind Voyages will start offering ex-UK voyages from May to August 2021, seven departures from Harwich and two from Glasgow. Northern European itineraries will feature Denmark, Iceland, the Norwegian fjords and the Baltics.

Voyages in late 2021 and into 2022 will feature Australia, the Indian Ocean, Japan,



Alaska, the Americas and the Pacific Islands. Itineraries will go on sale in September 2020.

Tradewind Voyages CEO Stuart McQuaker said: "We're looking forward to her UK season, and then taking her to some unique parts of the world, using prevailing winds and currents to capitalise on her sailing credentials."

In BRIEF

Virgin ups commission

● Virgin Voyages has announced it has increased agent commission to 16 per cent. The increase is not a limited-time offer, the line confirmed. The line's associate vice-president of sales, Shane Riley, said: "The world is changing and so are we, but our partnerships still mean the world to us."

Adventure sailing

● Saga's *Spirit of Adventure* will sail its first voyage in November. The ship, which is the second new-build in the fleet following *Spirit of Discovery*, will depart Southampton on 5 November to sail the Mediterranean.

APT's flexible booking

● APT has launched a new booking policy for 2021 itineraries. Guests who book a 2021 trip by 30 September 2020 will receive coverage and protection on new bookings at no charge. In addition, guests can secure a booking for only £250pp.

THE NEWS YOU NEED

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INDUSTRY

Shaw departs Saga

Robin Shaw is to leave his role as Saga Travel CEO. Before joining Saga, he held a series of senior roles in the travel industry with Avis Europe and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.

Shaw joined Saga in March 2010 as CEO of the cruise division and was appointed CEO of Saga Travel in January 2018.

Shaw has been at the helm during Saga's new-build programme, which has seen *Spirit of Discovery* and *Spirit of Adventure* join the cruise line's growing fleet.

In a statement, Saga group CEO Euan Sutherland said: "I wish to thank Robin for his contribution. Under his leadership Saga has developed a unique, boutique cruising offering that has really put us on the map in a competitive industry.

"He has been a great advocate for Saga customers and our brand, and we wish him well for the future."

Robin Shaw said: "The time is right for me to find a new challenge. I am proud of everything we have achieved in Saga Travel, particularly the creation of our two new ships.

"I look forward to new challenges as the travel industry resets itself in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis."



Ocean-going cruise lines have had to delay sailings from US ports again

OCEAN

CLIA extends US suspension

CLIA has announced that its ocean-going cruise line members have extended the suspension of cruise operations from US ports until 15 September 2020.

In a statement, the association said: "The current No Sail Order issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will expire on 24 July, and although we had hoped that cruise

activity could resume as soon as possible after that date, it is increasingly clear that more time will be needed to resolve barriers to resumption in the US.

"The additional time will also allow us to consult with the CDC on measures that will be appropriate for the eventual resumption of cruise operations.

"This voluntary suspension applies to all CLIA members to which the No Sail Order applied (vessels with capacity to carry 250 persons or more)."

CLIA added that member cruise lines will "continually evaluate the evolving situation" to determine if a further extension is necessary.

ADVICE

ABTA releases recovery guidance

A comprehensive guide has been developed by ABTA to assist destinations and the wider travel industry during the transition to restarting travel.

The Post Pandemic Recovery document, which is free to all ABTA members, is designed to help identify areas that should be considered when making modifications to operations.

Topics include the customer journey, management responsibility, risk assessment, health and safety, communication and more.

ABTA head of destinations Angela Hills said: "As we collectively embark on the road to restarting travel, it's important that

we continue to collaborate with and support stakeholders to give confidence that people can travel safely again.

"Any changes to operations or safety practices as part of the recovery process should be made in a balanced and proportionate way, with the primary focus being the safety and wellbeing of staff and customers, and should be in accordance with the legislation and public health requirements of the destination concerned."

ABTA partners and non-members can purchase the guide via abta.com/shop.

ABTA's Destinations team has also developed a country recovery plans page, available in the member zone on abta.com.



OCEAN

Changes afoot at Carnival UK

Carnival has announced that Simon Palethorpe has been promoted to the position of president of Carnival UK, expanding his current role as president of Cunard, while Josh Weinstein has been named Carnival Corporation's chief operations officer.

Weinstein will retain oversight of Carnival UK, the operating company for P&O Cruises and Cunard, which he has managed directly for the past three years.

Carnival UK has, however, also made several redundancies as part of its restructuring process.

Close to a third of shoreside jobs have been made redundant, while a



Cunard's president, Simon Palethorpe, will become president of Carnival UK

“significant proportion” of staff will take a period of sabbatical.

The company had already announced plans to cut jobs in the wake of the pandemic and difficulties caused by the suspension of sailings.

P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow said the cruise giant was “devastated to have to take this action, which has affected so many talented and dedicated colleagues”.



A new platform for Hurtigruten will give agents even more information about its ships

SUPPORT

Hurtigruten partners with Widgety

Hurtigruten is working with Widgety to make the latest information and content from the expedition brand available to the trade.

Agents can access information about the Hurtigruten fleet, new imagery and video content, brochures and itineraries, and excursions and latest pricing.

Hurtigruten head of UK sales Mark

Walter said: “We are delighted to announce our collaboration with Widgety. Working with the platform provides new opportunities to support and engage with the trade and makes promoting Hurtigruten products as easy and as accessible as possible for agents.”

Widgety director Damian Gevertz added: “Being able to include every element of Hurtigruten into our platform, both ship images and the huge number of cruise dates and pricing is beneficial to all.

“It allows Widgety to have a better range of content for agents, Hurtigruten to get easy distribution and access to its third-party agents, and agents to stay up to date.”



MARKETING GURU

Mark Lewsey of Accord Marketing discusses its new guide, designed to help steer companies through the pandemic

Cruise companies must be creative, agile and ready to adjust their products, services and strategies. Accord has compiled a marketing strategy report that offers statistics, insights and practical advice to help companies navigate the next few months and beyond. Here's a flavour of our seven guiding principles.

Narrow your niche – what do you want to be known for? Your proposition must be authentic and easily understood

Deep-dive segmentation – how has your customers' appetite to cruising changed? You must understand their needs, motivations, frustrations and expectations to identify opportunities

Go back to basics and revisit – how should you adapt your product? How can you offer added value? What channels drive the best response?

Monitor the market – look for signs of green shoots and analyse behaviour in real time

Adapt your comms strategy – optimise channel mix to reflect changes in consumer behaviour

Conversion funnel – review your data analytics for full funnel optimisation and fix weak links

Create a lead – compete and participate in search strategy ahead of demand

Scenic unveils 2021 river programme

Scenic has launched its 2021 European river cruise programme following a rise in new booking enquiries.

Highlights include culinary itineraries in France, a mini Danube sailing and traditional local cooking classes titled Ancestry of the Kitchen.

Guests booking before 31 July 2020 will benefit from savings of £1,200 per couple, complimentary door-to-door transfers and the line's new Deposit Protection Plan.

This scheme enables guests to change their travel dates or itinerary up to 90 days before departure. An additional early payment discount of £125pp is available on 2021 bookings paid in full by 31 October 2020. **For more information, visit scenic.co.uk.**



Scenic is offering a new Deposit Protection Plan for customers

VISIT

cruisetradenews.com
for more news on offers,
agent training options
and itineraries.

Back to school with CLIA

The CLIA Summer School is now open for business.

Created exclusively for UK & Irish travel agent members, Summer School features weekly webinars with CLIA cruise line members and partners. Sessions run from 9am-10am every Thursday until the end of August.

Additional sessions in July and August will take place on Wednesdays. Agents will hear from CLIA partners as they share expert selling tips, advice and insights.

CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer said: "Agents can ask questions and learn about industry updates, to help with queries their customers may have." **Agents can find out more at cruising.org.**



EVERY THURSDAY MORNING IN JULY AND AUGUST

Crystal opens 2023 bookings

Crystal Cruises has opened bookings for 2023 itineraries aboard *Crystal Serenity*.

The ship will sail voyages of seven to 23 nights, as well as a full world cruise with 140, 128 and 119-night options, and combination sailings of up to 100 nights without repeating ports.

Destinations include New England & Canada, the Dalmatian Coast, Black Sea, South Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean.

Cruise-only fares start from £1,993pp for a seven-night Caribbean Interlude itinerary, departing 4 January 2023.

Crystal Cruises senior vice-president of marketing and sales Carmen Roig said: "We're happy to offer more than three full years of global itineraries to inspire travellers' next journeys."



Crystal Serenity is looking well ahead

More than 90 itineraries are on offer from MSC Cruises

MSC releases winter 2020/21 programme

MSC Cruises' winter 2020/2021 season includes more than 90 itineraries across the Caribbean, Mediterranean, the Gulf, South Africa, South America and Asia.

Itineraries range from two to 24 nights, plus there's a Grand Voyages programme.

MSC Magnifica will sail her third world cruise, departing on 5 January 2021 for the 119-day journey, with 52 calling points. Other highlights include four or seven-night cruises to Key West, Nassau and Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, with nine Grand Voyages in spring 2021.



Treasures of the Nile will be showcased by AmaWaterways

Explore Egypt with AmaWaterways

AmaWaterways has released its 2021/2022 The Secrets of Egypt & The Nile e-brochure.

Guests can look forward to an immersive 11-night river cruise and land adventure, with itineraries beginning in September 2021 on the line's 68-guest *AmaDahlia*.

There are 17 departures planned for the 2021 season and 38 for 2022. The ship will make a seven-night round trip from Luxor.

Highlights include a visit to the Egyptian Museum, home to a vast collection of pharaonic art, including the treasures of Tutankhamun, as well as a visit to the Valley of the Kings and Queens.

AmaWaterways is also giving its trade partners the opportunity to have a co-branded version of the 2021/22 e-brochure to send to customers. Agents should contact their local business development manager or email agencysupport@amawaterways.com.

Royal introduces Selling Beyond Covid-19 training

Royal Caribbean Cruises has launched new training modules on the RCL Cares platform to help agents.

The Selling Beyond Covid-19 training consists of six modules, all featuring the latest sales tools focusing on science, psychology and change management, alongside up-to-date research on the effects of previous recessions and crises.

The RCL Cares hub was introduced in April. It offers information ranging from wellbeing support for families to links to UK government and ABTA advice, trade FAQs and contact details for sales support teams. Visit rclcares.co.uk for more information.



Collaboration is key

Seabourn UK & Ireland managing director
Lynn Narraway explains to Olivia Sharpe how the
line is supporting its trade partners

How is Seabourn helping agents?

We understand and value the vital role travel partners play in the success of the industry. We're working closely with our agent partners with policies to try to help them (and Seabourn itself) retain future business, for instance by offering generous 125 per cent future cruise credits for guests who've sadly had to cancel holidays.

We're also protecting 100 per cent base commission for paid-in-full bookings on these cancelled voyages and we have therefore recently extended a special four per cent bonus commission on agent base commission valid for bookings made by 31 July 2020 as a special thank you for their support during these times.

How do your agent partners feel about the future?

The travel industry has always been resilient to many past challenges and our partners have been amazingly supportive. Most of our agent partners are busy working with their existing clients to try to guide them through the process of planning their next holiday or helping them arrange a 100 per cent refund on



"Feedback from guests suggests they are looking forward to returning to cruise"

their cruise, if they're choosing to take that option.

We are talking with these partners daily to try to work with them on individual scenarios that will help our loyal Seabourn guests. During this pause in our business, we have continued to assess the environment to determine when we can resume operations. While we're beginning to see some positive signs, the point at which we can begin sailing remains uncertain.

What do you see as the new norms of cruising?

Seabourn ships already offer very generous space per guest, both in our public areas and in our suites, the vast majority of which have large private verandas. In our continued support of public health efforts, any return to

service will also include whatever enhanced operational protocols and social gathering guidelines are in place at the time of the resumption of cruise operations. When the industry resumes, it will do so with the health and safety of our guests, crew and the people in each of the destinations we visit as a priority, just as it has been throughout our history.

How will the industry regain confidence from customers?

We all need leisure time with our family and friends and so we remain optimistic about the long-term desire for travel. Feedback from our guests suggests that they are looking forward to returning to cruise in the future.

How can lines and the wider industry fight back against negative national press coverage?

We've already seen that much of the more recent media coverage has been positive towards our industry, with many of our valued cruise media writing their "love letters to cruise" and posting videos on social media. We need to take advantage of these opportunities and showcase the incredible variety of experiences and destinations that are best visited on a cruise holiday.

Why do you believe the cruise industry will survive the pandemic?

We're one of the few industries where – within CLIA – many companies collaborate together, and our strength lies in our strong relationships and our partnerships with agents. Travel and holidays have become an almost essential part of modern life, and while we currently pause, most of us are dreaming of destinations we will visit in the future. 🌐



Seabourn is putting its faith in agents to sell its itineraries

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CTN investigates

Project restart

A handful of ships are back out on the high seas and other lines are planning a return in the near future.

But what is the future of the on-board experience?

Cruise Trade News investigates



There is no doubt that the world is now moving to stage two of recovery, as blanket, full lockdowns are lifted bit by bit.

For cruise, the situation is mixed, as demonstrated recently when CLIA announced that the association's ocean-going cruise line

members will voluntarily extend the suspension of operations from US ports until 15 September 2020.

However, this is not the case for all. At the time of writing, other lines are preparing to sail, while a handful have already lifted anchor and welcomed guests on board.

A new experience

In early June, the first European river cruise post lockdown set sail on Nicko Cruises' 220-passenger *NickoVision*.

Sailing with a reduced capacity of 110 German passengers from Passau to Dusseldorf and with enhanced health and safety measures in place, all guests were required to bring a health form sent to them by the line and only those who passed the questionnaire with "no objectionable result" were admitted on the ship.

Self-service buffets were suspended, with the crew serving breakfast from the buffet or a la carte from the kitchen.

A Nicko Cruises spokesperson told CTN: "Our guests have reported that they got used to the small changes very



CroisiEurope will be operating strict pre-boarding health checks

quickly and no longer think about wearing a mask in the corridor, for example. This does not detract from the beautiful travel experience."

Feedback has been "overwhelmingly positive", the spokesperson added. "We have received nothing but positive feedback so far and our guests on board are extremely happy to be able to travel again."

Operator VIVA Cruises is sailing new four-night cruises in Germany throughout July and August on board *MS Treasures* and *MS Inspire*, at 70 per cent occupancy and with similar safety procedures to

those found on *NickoVision*, including screening and compulsory face masks.

The new itineraries can be booked from £400pp for a twin cabin. Passengers will also receive a credit of £23 to spend on one of the excursions.

VIVA Cruises COO Andrea Kruse explains: "The river cruise industry is ready to start welcoming guests again, especially with flights resuming in July. The German ports are also very accessible by train and car for those who may not want to fly.

"We will be making sure that new measures have a minimal impact on the



Itineraries are departing with reduced capacity, which varies from ship to ship, and excursions have continued in smaller groups

overall experience while ensuring maximum safety. We are really looking forward to welcoming guests on our ships.”

On CroisiEurope, which intends to resume post 16 July, all passengers will receive a questionnaire before their cruise to ensure that they are not sick and have not been in contact with people who have the virus. Luggage will be disinfected and all passengers will have their temperature taken.

For dinner, there will be two service times, a table service and assigned seating for guests. On board, masks will be available, while cabins and common areas will have increased disinfection and cleaning criteria.

As for ocean cruising, Norwegian operator Hurtigruten became the first major ocean line to resume operations. In June, its 12-day coastal voyage from Bergen on board *Finnmarken* had approximately 200 Norwegian and Danish guests on board. Other itineraries are also scheduled to depart.

In a boost to the UK trade, Hurtigruten has introduced four expedition voyages departing from Dover from mid-March 2021 aboard *Maud*, which will carry fewer

than 500 passengers and will have been refurbished before arrival in the UK port.

Action at A-Rosa and Paul Gauguin

Much interest surrounded A-Rosa's relaunch on the Douro on 17 June. Sailing on *A-Rosa Alva*, such was the initial success that the line has since resumed sailings on the Rhine, first on a 10-day Experience the Northern Rhine and Moselle itinerary. It also returned to the Danube on 20 June. Itineraries in France are scheduled to restart on 11 July, at time of writing.

Itineraries are departing with reduced capacity, which varies from ship to ship. Excursions by bike, bus or as a walking tour have continued in smaller groups than usual, while socially-distanced dining arrangements have been in place.

The restart followed implementation of a new health and hygiene concept developed by A-Rosa and the Robert Koch Institute in Germany and the World Health Organisation.

A-Rosa UK & Ireland MD Lucia Rowe says: “The initial feedback has been really positive, and the new concept is working

well for guests and crew alike. Everyone seems to be taking more time to enjoy everything and they are grateful that after the hard months of lockdown they are able to take a holiday at all.”

Paul Gauguin Cruises, known for its voyages in the South Pacific, announced in June a plan to sail its seven-night Tahiti and French Polynesia small-ship voyages, first departing on 11 and 18 July for the local French Polynesian market.

The line also intends to welcome both local and international guests on its 10-night Society Islands & Tuamotus voyage, departing 29 July 2020, from Papeete, Tahiti. In August and beyond, the line will sail previously scheduled seven to 14-night Tahiti, French Polynesia, and South Pacific sailings.

A Covid-safe health protocol has been introduced, developed in tandem with Méditerranée Infection of Marseilles.

Among a slew of measures, prior to boarding, all guests and crew members will have to present a signed doctor's medical form. Public spaces, such as the fitness room and theatre, will have 50 per cent occupancy. Zodiacs will be thoroughly disinfected after each stop-over.

SeaDream Yacht Club is another that has entered the ring. On 20 June *SeaDream I* sailed from Oslo. The line will operate seven and 12-day voyages on the Norwegian coast, up north to Tromsø.

Much is likely to develop over the coming weeks and months, and of course this is not a full summary of those taking steps to return to service, but it does provide a snapshot into the future – at least the short term – of the cruise experience that awaits UK passengers. 📌



A-Rosa is once again sailing on some of Europe's finest rivers

”
In conversation with...

Cruise experts

Gary Peters speaks to a selection of industry heads
to discover how they intend to move forward
on the slow march back to normality



Jacqueline Dobson

President
BARRHEAD TRAVEL

The theme in recent conversations I've had with colleagues across the industry is how quickly the past three months have gone, with myriad changes and challenges all rising and receding in short order. There are many obstacles still to overcome and plenty of unknowns ahead, but we're starting to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Three months ago, we were faced with what seemed at the time unthinkable: the abrupt shutdown of the global travel industry. It took less than 10 days for the world to close its doors temporarily to tourism.

Then, the situation seemed insurmountable. Fast forward to now, and I'm so proud of my Barrhead Travel team, what we have overcome and what we've achieved so far.

Some of the big challenges we have faced will become lessons for the future and will shape how we move forward.

Like most other businesses in the industry, we're not naive enough to think we have navigated the storm perfectly, but I know we have the strength and resilience to weather it and will emerge as a stronger business.

I also firmly believe there is a strong future for the high street agency. When confidence fully returns to clients across the UK – and there are signs it is returning already – people will need their trusted local agent to help them navigate the new world of travel, even more so than before. In uncertain times, people need genuine assurances and expertise, and that's where agencies can help rebuild demand.

Complex holidays such as cruising and long haul will need lots of specialist expertise, and customers will look to agencies that can offer a vast spectrum of knowledge.

The appetite for cruising and adventure holidays is high for 2021 and beyond, but clients are keen to collect as much information and detail about their trip as possible. Over the coming months, we expect a

deluge of information to arrive about new health and safety measures for all travel. We're preparing for how we filter this information to our clients, using a mix of resources (and creativity) to do so.

Flexibility, accessible information and financial protection will be key pillars for customers. We must continue to work together to ensure we can deliver this and morph to meet this new type of demand.



Edwina Lonsdale

Managing Director
MUNDY CRUISING

“People will need their trusted local travel agent to help them navigate the new world of travel, even more so than before”

JACQUELINE DOBSON

As we and many of our colleagues begin to open our doors again, it is a good time to review the past few months and make sure we have learnt everything we can.

The days and weeks have seemed to stretch and drag, then to flash by, while the

“It has been great to find our systems are sufficiently robust to incorporate flexible working... but face to face is essential”

EDWINA LONSDALE

speedy transitions from positivity and optimism to gloom and despair have been called the “corona-coaster”.

Never have we been more in need of our colleagues for mutual support, warmth, advice, sympathy, enthusiasm, excitement and humour. This is why, despite the success of the working-from-home project, I am not planning to change that aspect of my business model any time soon.

It has been great to find our systems are sufficiently robust for us to incorporate flexible working into our processes, but for consistency in delivering standards, championing company culture and behaviour, and maintaining morale, a sense of community and a shared purpose, face to face is essential.

This ties in closely with our client relationships. Social links with other people – and the ability to communicate and listen effectively – are core to our business, especially in times of anxiety and uncertainty.

Faced with ferocious vitriol in the early days – reading some of the media and social

coverage, it seemed that lines had single-handedly created the virus and spread it around the world – the industry has maintained its dignity, focused on the issues at hand, such as the repatriation of passengers and crew, and started work on planning for the future.

What I most admire is the high level of collaboration, under the auspices of CLIA, the lack of complacency and the huge investment in finding effective ways forward. Experts in health, safety and epidemiology are no strangers to the industry and each company is building on an existing platform of standards that are only just now being introduced by hotels and airlines, and aiming for levels that will ensure that in the future, a cruise ship will be one of safest places anywhere.

Confidence and demand are returning, and it is giving us huge pleasure to move on from the period of reassurance, efficiency and administrative expertise required to handle cancellations and refunds, to the delight of planning dream holidays and reunions.

“Lines are planning further enhanced health technologies, and protocols informed by leading experts in science and medicine”

ANDY HARMER



Andy Harmer

UK & Ireland Director

CLIA

The global health crisis has affected every setting where people come together for shared experiences, including restaurants, hotels, theatres and, yes, cruise ships.

What is different about our industry, however, is that no other sector, including airlines, has such stringent screening protocols or illness-reporting requirements in place, year in and year out, and outside of a global crisis.

CLIA ocean-going cruise line members have effectively taken responsibility for protecting public health on cruise ships for more than 50 years, and the health and safety of guests and crew have always been paramount. For the future, lines are planning further enhanced health technologies, and protocols informed by leading experts in science and medicine.

As we plan for the resumption of operations, CLIA has been working closely with the UK government,

health authorities and ports to discuss these challenges and help develop the protocols.

As always, we want to support travel agents in any way we can. Over recent months CLIA has created new online education resources, such as our Cruise Webcasts, the Cruise Champion course, and the CLIA Summer School, launching this month.

Our Cruise Champion course, available to all travel agents, is an interactive programme that offers insight into the workings of the global cruise sector. The CLIA Summer School features weekly live webinars with cruise line representatives and CLIA partners, allowing agents to ask questions and learn about industry updates.

Last but not at all least, after a year of hard work and planning, we will see all CLIA travel agent members move to a new digital platform – cruising.org – which will be the global home of the industry, uniting all CLIA members.



Gemma Antrobus

Owner

HASLEMERE TRAVEL

We have been booking holidays and handling enquiries throughout [this process], so there is definitely some demand. I have the oddest conversations, with people who are planning 18 months in advance to people who are wondering why they can't get on a flight in three weeks' time.

Some of our older clients are thinking they may not want to travel this year, so they are looking at next year. The challenging thing for us is that obtaining the information for clients is taking very much longer, because our tour operator partners have fewer

staff working. Nothing is simple at the moment.

Most of our cruisers are in the mature market, so quite a few of them have cancelled. But even when clients have asked for refunds, they have said they will spend that money again. They just want to know that they've got their money back and that they can choose to do with it what they

"The same protocols we're seeing introduced around cleanliness in everyday life have been the norm on cruise ships for many years"

MICHAEL WILSON

like. The majority have said they will want to book another trip with that refund.

I think there is empathy for our industry. Where there are good travel agents, the word spreads very quickly. I've had so many new people ringing in, people who have been recommended by friends. I think where agents have really helped people, that will pay massive dividends in the future because clients will want to go to agents who can help them.

The human element of having a good travel agent is going to pay dividends in the coming years. People have more questions now than ever before and they want someone to be able to answer them. You can't get that from the internet.

[This situation] has brought home the human element of what we do. Without a doubt, every travel company is going to be smaller coming out of this because it's just the nature of what's happened. However, within that, there is an opportunity to re-examine everything and become more "human" with clients. It will be about the personal touch.

Service is what we win on, and now it's about over-servicing. We're going to have to build up our teams. Reputation and word of mouth – that's how we're going to do it.



Michael Wilson

Managing Director

BOLSOVER CRUISE CLUB

Recent times have been some of the most testing the travel industry has and will ever face.

Port and border closures have meant constantly changing timelines in terms of sailing suspensions, which has in turn meant a constant effort on our part at Bolsover Cruise Club to keep our customers informed and, equally, our team on the phones up-to-date with the correct information regarding future cruise credit and refund policies.

With the nation taking slow steps towards re-opening, we're already beginning to see signs of increased demand for travel. New bookings and enquiries are up, while website traffic is no longer purely focused on finding cancellation information but rather on options for travel in 2021. This reinforces my prediction that we won't see a true return to cruising as we know it until Q2 next year, and even then, I expect port

"People have more questions now than ever before and they want someone to answer them. You can't get that from the internet"

GEMMA ANTROBUS

closures may still have some impact on sailings.

I have no doubt that travel and indeed cruising will overcome the present issues. The pandemic has left the nation desperate for a break and while that may need to be UK-based in the short term, I believe recent events will lead to people planning those big trips that have been on their mind for years. Similarly, I think we'll see an increase in multi-generational family holidays as people emerge from lockdown and place renewed importance on spending time with loved ones.

Travel will need to double down on how it keeps people safe and healthy. The same protocols we're seeing introduced around cleanliness and sanitisation in everyday life have been the norm on cruise ships for many years; it really is one of the safest ways to travel, and communicating that is key.



Bruce Nierenberg

**Cruise consultant
and founder**

VICTORY CRUISE LINES

Cruise lines should shun a 'spray and pray' approach to Covid-19 and invest in public health solutions that have a lasting impact.

The industry can learn from this pandemic and invest in solutions that will also combat future pathogens. Every five

to 10 years, new strains emerge as threats: before Covid-19, SARS, H1N1 and MERS all impacted travel.

Now is the time to invest in permanent improvements for the day-in, day-out health of guests and crew.

My research has found solutions that address not just Covid-19 but other airborne pathogens and air quality issues. Photocatalytic Oxidation (PCO) kills 99.9 per cent of pathogens, including viruses and bacteria, by continuously purifying the air and surfaces. It can be installed in food prep areas. PCO also attacks volatile compounds that irritate eyes, nose and throat and cause headache, fatigue, dizziness or more serious health issues. This is done 24/7, 365 days a year. Research suggests that outfitting PCO tech on a 2,000-passenger ship, for example, would cost approximately \$200,000.

For pool deck furniture, lighting fixtures and windows, there are photocatalytic surface treatments. The product is sprayed on, forming an invisible film that is durably bonded to treated surfaces.

For health screening and monitoring, passengers and crew can download an app to enter their basic health history and temperature pre-departure. Their temperature can be monitored, as the app assigns a code to each person and automatically records their temperature whenever it is taken. Should there be a spike, medical staff are alerted. Individual records are safely stored in the cloud and automatically erased later.

Using such tech, cruise lines can show health authorities we're working to go above and beyond what's required. Bold actions are needed to assure them and restore the public's confidence in cruising.

All these advances would go a long way towards ending the idea of ships as a giant petri dish for disease.



Sarah Wikevand

Managing Director
ROL CRUISE

Without doubt, 2020 has been far from the kindest year so far; it feels as though we have faced a lot in a very short time.

Our business has weathered much in its 25 years and has always got through it, due to the commitment of our passionate and dedicated staff. We are very fortunate to have built up a loyal team and at least 50 per cent have been with us for five years or more.

We have quickly transitioned staff members into customer-facing roles when volumes have increased, without the need for extensive additional training – all thanks to their knowledge of our business.

Customer service is at the heart of ROL and it has been important to talk to customers who have needed support as a result of the suspended sailings. We want them to feel

satisfied with the contact they have with us. Having an agile workforce has supported this.

One challenge we have had to overcome is understanding the different policies on refunds, transfers and cancellations. With the ever-changing landscape – especially at the beginning of the outbreak – this took some time to work through. We now have set processes in place so staff can access the very latest policy data for every cruise partner.

Amid this unprecedented situation, we were keen to find a way we could give back. We set the ambitious target of raising £100,000 for NHS Charities Together, a figure we have now reached.

The appetite for cruise is still there and we're talking to seasoned cruisers who are looking to 2021 and 2022 with excitement and confidence. ●

“One challenge we have had to overcome is understanding all of the different policies on refunds and cancellations”

SARAH WIKEVAND

Win at selling

In a new landscape

This is a time of uncertainty, but also an opportunity to improve product knowledge, as SeaDream Yacht Club's head of UK operations, **Jos Dewing**, explains

Unfortunately, it's not possible to say how long travel will change for or if it will ever go back to what it was just a few months ago. However, with change comes opportunity and through crises new leaders are born, as our industry is seeing.

Currently there are essentially two groups – those furloughed or seeking new opportunities and those still at work. For agents in the former, it's a time for learning, time to take online courses, embark on more product training and explore and research new products.

This is crucial, as one effect of Covid-19 may be that certain clients' travel preferences will change, so it's important to read up on possible alternatives to traditional products. For example, clients may seek smaller, more agile ships that may provide greater flexibility when it comes to adopting new



“Keep the conversation moving and track changes”

requirements, operational processes and itinerary planning.

There has certainly been increased interest in SeaDream, as it fulfils many of these points. We've even built a product website just to help with the new level of UK interest: seadream.co.uk.

Become travel planners

A very important transition for some agents will be to become travel planners as opposed to traditional reservations agents. I believe travel clients will become more discerning, with planning ahead and detail bigger components of the booking process. It's a good time to give this some thought, take regular clients aside and assess their possible future preferences.

Cruise holidays coming out of lockdown will be major events and major events require meticulous thought and planning. They must also take into account new factors that may be more relevant now.

Contact with clients has never been more important, even if it's

just a call to see how they are, how they're feeling about future travel and have their preferences altered? Keep the conversation moving and always track changes. Some agents, encouragingly, are reporting high interest in future programmes.

At SeaDream, interest in full yacht charters is increasing as clients see the benefit in private travel with friends and family. Many charters consist of groups of couples or families and can be incredible value when their resources are pooled. Clients could also take a deck for their group.

In addition, at SeaDream we have seen phenomenal domestic booking levels on the new Norway cruises this summer, which only went on sale in May.

It's important to stay agile. Prepare now, because tomorrow the phone may ring off the hook. 📞

Selling TIPS

Become an expert in new products as once travel restarts many clients may have different preferences

•

Think ahead and stay in contact with clients – the personal touch has never been more important

•

Stay agile and get ready for the comeback. Now is the time to prepare for the travel of the future



For some clients, small ships could be the choice of tomorrow

Spotlight *on...*

Social distancing

IBS Software head of cruise **Asish Koshy** explains why he believes technology is key to boosting guest confidence

The dawn of the Covid-19 world has left many wondering if the sunshine of a holiday will now be

eclipsed by the global pandemic and the anxieties that follow in its wake.

Over the coming months, the global cruise industry will slowly restart operations and begin to repair some of the damage caused by the enforced suspension of cruises.

But lines will be successful in enticing guests only if they can convince them they need not worry about their safety on board. Understandably, social distancing is a critical concern and lines will take clear and effective measures to safeguard guests.

New technology – or rather, new use cases for existing technology – is set to play a pivotal role in ushering in social distancing on board. Despite the economic backdrop, cruise lines are investing in technology to adapt and transform the guest experience accordingly.

Changing the experience

First and foremost, mass embarkation and long lines of holidaymakers will become a thing of the past.

Technology extensions to reservation or on-board systems will allow companies to stagger embarkation and disembarkation times



based on cabin category, loyalty, clients' special needs and a variety of other factors.

QR tokens will be issued in advance and these will be verified at the terminal. Guests will be checked based on medical documents and history and

this will be available for reference throughout the journey. I foresee that low-risk passengers will be fast tracked, while those considered high risk may see additional procedures including thermal scanning to help mitigate worries.

Once their passengers are on board, lines must strike a difficult balance between the prioritisation of safety and allowing customers to have an authentic – albeit altered – cruise experience.

Cruise companies will turn to token-based technology to control access to information desks and retail shops.

In addition, shore excursions and shows will be capacity controlled and guests will be provided with the option to book via guest mobile apps and interactive TVs.

Cruise lines will also deploy new digital engagement services for guests, pushing interactions online and finding new ways to combine top customer service with adherence to strict safety measures.

The dining experience is the perfect example. With the much-loved self-service buffet at least temporarily confined to the past and the reduction in dining capacity at



“Contactless guest identification and payments will be the norm as we go forward”

restaurants, companies will be providing e-ordering facilities to allow guests to order room service or from their tabletops with minimum interaction from crew members.

The orders will be displayed directly at the galley, making it easier for chefs. Equally, contactless guest identification and payments will be the norm as we go forward.

Times may be uncertain for the world and for our industry, but technology will be a powerful ally for companies hoping to rebuild their customer base and emerge as a voice of trust and support for loyal cruise fans. 📱



Fast Facts

Boudicca may be named after a British warrior queen, but this ship is definitely friendly. Part of Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' fleet, the vessel was purpose built for the British market, with an elegant design reminiscent of majestic ocean liners. The ship provides an intimate cruising experience, sailing round-the-world voyages and mini cruises to the continent. *Boudicca* is quintessentially British, so guests can expect tea and coffee making facilities in every single cabin.

.....

10

DECKS

448

CABINS

2

POOLS

5

RESTAURANTS

853

PASSENGERS

329

CREW

Boudicca



Restaurants

For a small ship, *Boudicca* packs a punch when it comes to dining – with five restaurants on board. Guests can enjoy full cooked breakfasts, healthy options and five-course dinners. For something extra special, there is The Grill, serving lobster, *filet mignon* and fresh fish.



Bars

Fred Olsen's friendly army of bar staff are always on hand to tend to guests' favourite tipples. There are eight drinking holes around the ship, each with a unique experience. Guests can enjoy a fruity cocktail in the al fresco Marquee Bar, or try the popular Neptune Lounge for an indulgent nightcap.



3



Spa/gym

With *Boudicca* sailing all around the globe on grand voyages, guests will find a world of wellness and fitness perfect for feeling rejuvenated and staying in shape. The Atlantis spa is the place to go to relax, or guests can work off the five-course dinners in the well-equipped fitness centre.

4



Entertainment

Boudicca is a hub of guest speakers, art and craft lessons, quizzes and performers, with activities on from dawn till dusk keeping guests entertained throughout the trip. They can experience wine tastings and talks on piloting Concorde, or enjoy a series of live shows while on board.

5



Accommodation

Boudicca's cabins are stylish and quintessentially British, packed with home comforts like tea and coffee making facilities and a well-stocked mini bar. Five categories make the ship accessible for everyone, with comfortable interiors and a range of spacious and elegant suites.

Looking ahead

It is a difficult time for all concerned at Carnival UK. However, as P&O Cruises president **Paul Ludlow** explains to Olivia Sharpe, there is hope for the future

Right off the bat, the words are positive. “Current bookings show strong volumes from both past guests and ones new to P&O Cruises, demonstrating the enduring demand from previous customers and from ones new to holidaying with us.”

These words come from the president of the leading British cruise line, who recently spoke to *CTN* about how P&O Cruises is tackling the issues caused by the pandemic.

For Paul Ludlow, strong booking volumes from both new-to-cruise and veteran cruisers highlight how there continues to be consumer demand for cruise holidays despite the current restrictions on travel.

Following the global suspension of sailings, Ludlow notes how the cruise line has seen many of its guests reschedule their booking for 2021, so much so that for some parts of the next 12 months, it is close to nearing full capacity for family groups.

He says: “We are seeing guests who were due to sail during our pause this year switching to the same holiday at the same time next year.

“With these bookings adding to existing 2021 bookings plus guests who are eager to experience our latest ship, *Iona*, availability in 2021 is already increasingly limited. If guests have a preference for a specific time of year,

ship or itinerary, we recommend that they book it soon.

“Availability for family groups during the 2021 school summer holidays is already extremely limited and we recommend that guests already look at alternative school holidays such as Easter, Christmas or half-term breaks next year.”

New systems

With many guests having opted for the cruise line’s future cruise credit (FCC),



“We are seeing guests who were due to sail during our pause this year switching to the same holiday for next year”

PAUL LUDLOW

Ludlow is pleased to stress that P&O Cruises is amending its systems so that guests who opted for the enhanced 125 per cent FCC instead of a refund can redeem online without the need to call.

Of course, the line, like so many, has had to process many refunds, resulting in Ludlow taking to social media to reassure customers that the company is doing everything it can to speed up the process.

Posting a message on Facebook, he said: “The first thing for me to stress is

Ships such as *Britannia* have a legacy of 180 years behind them



that the refund process is underway. We are proud to be a travel company that is able to offer refunds but the impact of Covid-19 upon our business, your businesses, and all of our lives has been devastating, and therefore the complexity and scale of this task have been unprecedented for us."

Ludlow added that the line was "very aware of the financial constraints everyone is under at the moment and we are not delaying [refunds] intentionally".

"Despite the challenges, we have been able to put new technology and systems and also additional resources in place, which will result in more refunds being processed more quickly, and I hope this will improve the situation daily."

We will travel again

Like others, P&O Cruises has been forced to extend its suspension of sailings until 15 October 2020 (at the time of writing) and Ludlow is very sorry that the company will not be able to offer guests a summer holiday this year.

In a video message in June, he stated: "We are working with government and industry bodies at the highest possible

level, such as Public Health England (PHE) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to review every aspect of a holiday with us and establish a framework of policies and procedures. Our aspiration is to be adopting best practice in managing Covid-19 within the travel industry."

In spite of the delay, Ludlow remains confident that the line, and the wider industry, will bounce back.

"However long it takes, however difficult it is to get there, we will all travel again. It certainly won't be next week, and it probably won't be next month or the month after, but we will all travel again.

"P&O Cruises has a heritage going back more than 180 years. We know our guests are eager to return to a P&O Cruises holiday and when the time is right, we look forward to welcoming them on board."

Despite the positive outlook, it has been a difficult time for many at Carnival UK. The company has recently completed a consultation period that has seen it cut shoreside jobs by almost a third. Among these are a number of trade-facing roles. In a statement



The rules will be changing for all public areas on board

released at the end of June, Ludlow said:

"We are devastated to have to take this action, which has affected so many talented and dedicated colleagues. We appreciate it is a very difficult and unsettling time for everyone but we have followed a clear and fair consultation process and considered all individual suggestions for new ways of working.

"Our commitment to the trade is as strong as ever. We remain committed to developing new ways of working to support our agent partners." 📢



CRYSTAL CLEAR

Look to the future with *Crystal Serenity's* new 2023 itineraries – featuring explorations of the Black Sea, Dalmatian Coast, South Pacific, Africa, New England, the Caribbean and more

With the world starting to creep out of lockdown, and life beginning to look a little more like normal, holidays are coming to the forefront of people's minds. And whether guests are looking towards the end of this year, next year or even further ahead, Crystal has the perfect cruise.

With *Crystal Serenity's* full roster of 2023 voyages just launched, guests can

now choose from four years of itineraries aboard the World's Best.

In 2023, the ship will sail individual voyages of seven to 23 nights, as well as a full World Cruise, offered with 140-, 128- and 119-night options, and combination sailings of up to 100 nights without repeating ports.

Enhancing a line-up of sailings that spans the globe from the South Pacific to St Barts, the Black Sea to Boston, and the Mediterranean to Miami, is the added incentive of Crystal's new Easy Book programme, which offers reduced deposits for all new bookings.

Highlights of Crystal Serenity's 2023 itineraries include:

Wild Kingdoms & Exotic Discoveries World Cruise, embarking 11 January

A total of 140 nights from Miami to Barcelona, with alternative disembarkation options in Venice and Athens for 128-night and 119-night itineraries respectively, this epic voyage visits 73 destinations in all. Among them are five maiden ports and 19 overnights across 40 countries on six continents – with a focus on the world's greatest wonders and UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Destinations range from the South Pacific and



The design of all Crystal ships is inherently healthy, offering nearly twice as much space per guest as other ships of a similar size

Papua New Guinea to Myanmar and the Seychelles, with opportunities to take an African safari and explore the ancient wonders of Egypt.

A connoisseur's collection of the Black Sea, Mediterranean and Western Europe, from 10 May to 16 September

This exceptional sailing offers layer upon layer of rich artistic and cultural heritage to be explored in Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal. Guests can also look forward to a sojourn in the Black Sea, visiting Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia and Turkey, as well as a voyage along the Dalmatian Coast to Croatia and Montenegro, and all the romantic ports of Iberia.

Autumn beauty in New England and Canada, from 27 September to 28 October

When the famed autumn foliage of the region reaches peak brilliance, these sailings explore bastions of US history in places such as Newport and Bar Harbor, the majestic forests and wilderness trails that cloak the coastline, as well as the big-city life of Manhattan, Boston and Quebec.

Caribbean island escapes, from 5 November to 22 December

For the ultimate in winter luxury, nothing beats sailing the turquoise waters from one sun-kissed Caribbean shore to another, every island offering warm hospitality, but each with its own character and culture. Boutique ports on the likes of St Barts, Antigua, St

Kitts and St Maarten offer travellers a balance of chic shops, quaint villages and opportunities to get active outdoors, while the reefs of Honduras and Belize are perfect for snorkelling and diving.

These are just some of the sensational sailings planned for *Crystal Serenity* – and stay tuned for *Crystal Symphony's* 2023 deployment.

Your health, our priority

With 30 years of cruising to the far reaches of the world, Crystal has a long tradition of implementing and maintaining the highest standard of health and safety policies at sea.

While our fleet is paused, the Crystal team is developing new procedures and policies that will support all public health and

regulatory requirements and ensure that our guests' holidays continue to be not only relaxing and pleasurable, but also safe and healthy. Details of these new measures and initiatives will be announced soon.

Additionally, the design of all Crystal ships is inherently healthy, offering nearly twice as much space per guest as other ships of a similar size – ideal for those who choose to keep their distance on board. Furthermore, *Crystal Endeavor* and Crystal's river ships are all-suite, and most staterooms on our two ocean ships feature private verandas for fresh airflow.

Above all, the safety of our guests and crew is our first priority and we will resume service only when our own experts, as well as global health and government authorities, indicate that it is safe to do so. ①

For information, call Crystal Cruises on 020 7399 7601 or visit [crystalcruises.co.uk](https://www.crystalcruises.co.uk)





1

6

OF THE BEST

Solo cruises

Before lockdown, going it alone on a cruise was fast becoming the holiday of choice for many. With that in mind, **Melissa Moody** looks at the voyages to highlight when enticing back those clients travelling solo

1 Unspoilt Azores

The big draw: Cruise & Maritime Voyages has dedicated single cabins for solo travellers. And there's more: the scenery on its Azores, Madeira & Portuguese Highlights itinerary aboard *Marco Polo*, taking in volcanic craters and lush valleys. Madeira, known as the floating garden of Atlantic, and the colourful cities of La Coruña and Lisbon, really bring the trip to life, while the calmer waters of the Azores will provide a much-needed breath of fresh air. Prices for the 14-night cruise, departing Bristol on 12 July 2021, start from £2,319.

2 Picture perfect

Aboard P&O Cruises' newest ship, *Iona*, solo explorers will be able to experience the Norwegian fjords in all their glory. Departing Southampton on 7 August 2021 for seven nights, the ship will sail to lively Stavanger, one of Norway's oldest cities, before heading to the idyllic village and awe-inspiring landscapes of Olden and Haugesund. Prices for a solo traveller start from £1,486.

3 South African sights

Guests can uncover South Africa on Azamara's six-port, 12-night intensive voyage. Beginning and ending the journey in Cape Town with its cosmopolitan streets, *Azamara Journey* will sail on to Port Elizabeth, East London, Maputo, Richards Bay and Durban. From safaris, mountains and colonial-era architecture, this is an action-packed itinerary. Prices start from approximately £2,927, departing 7 March 2021.

4

4 Hawaiian holiday

Norwegian Cruise Line is providing solo guests with the ultimate Hawaiian holiday on *Pride of America*.

The round trip from Honolulu will explore the lush vegetation of Kauai and the dramatic volcanoes and famous surfing beaches of Oahu. This itinerary also includes opportunities for guests to experience the best of island life. The ship includes studio rooms perfect for a solo traveller and access to the studio lounge as a way of meeting other single cruisers. Prices for the seven-day cruise start from £2,619 for a studio cabin. Departing 24 April 2021.

5 Hamburg to Holland

Guests can enjoy an autumnal escape on Saga's five-night mini cruise, calling at Hamburg and Ijmuiden (for Amsterdam). The cobbled streets and turrets in Speicherstadt (Warehouse Town) make this unique area in Hamburg feel a world away from the cosmopolitan city. Moving on to Amsterdam's gabled houses, leafy canal walks, unusual boutiques and pavement cafés, this cruise on *Spirit of Adventure* is perfect for a relaxing short break. Departing Dover on 5 October 2021 on *Spirit of Adventure*, prices start from £1,621.

3

5



6 Explore the Americas

Passengers can delve into a melting pot of culture, history and natural beauty in the Americas with Fred Olsen Cruise Lines. Sailing on *Boudicca*, they'll experience authentic Cuban life with dancing, rum and classic cars in Havana. Departing on 4 November 2021, guests will also be able to explore Mexico and Belize and uncover Costa Rican nature reserves and rainforest. Prices for the 40-night itinerary start from £7,998 for a single cabin. ①

6



Barcelona, with its unmistakable architecture, will be one of the calling points for *Celebrity Apex*



Future **cruising**

Absence makes the heart grow fonder – never has that saying felt more appropriate. With exciting itineraries and amazing destinations, cruising is set to wow once more in 2021 and beyond. **Daniel Bradley** reports

Private balconies come as standard
on Saga's new *Spirit of Adventure*



Destination special: Itineraries

New ships, engaging itineraries and a host of new experiences are on the menu for 2021 and beyond

Recently it has been harder than usual to generate excitement when it comes to planning a cruise.

However, all is by no means lost. There is some positive news that demand is building, and, as lockdown restrictions are gradually eased, customers can begin to look to the future and to their next voyage. Think stunning new ships, engaging itineraries and a host of new experiences on offer from some of the biggest players in the industry.

Without a doubt, cruising will be back, bigger and better than ever. So with that in mind, here is a selection of itineraries, spanning the globe, to promote to clients once they feel ready to indulge their wanderlust once more.



On board *Mardi Gras*, Carnival is providing fun for all

Adventure with Apex

Earlier this year Celebrity Cruises took virtual delivery of *Celebrity Apex*, the newest addition in the Edge series. With her outward-facing design and magnificent interior spaces, *Celebrity Apex* brings a touch of luxury to the ocean in a way rarely seen before. Notable venues include Eden, an ultra-stylish entertainment venue, and the Magic Carpet, the cantilevered, floating platform as showcased on *Celebrity Edge*.

Details

- 14-night Spain, Portugal and Canary Islands cruise departs 21 October 2021, from £1,259pp, excluding flights.
- 🔗 celebritycruises.com

A new spirit

Spirit of Adventure is Saga's latest boutique ship. Designed in a similar style to her sister, *Spirit of Discovery*, but with her own distinct identity, she is set to wow with expertly crafted interiors, an array of all-inclusive food and beverage options, as well as vibrant cabins where a private balcony comes as standard. This is ideal for clients seeking a smaller, more intimate style of cruise while not sacrificing choice.

Details

- A five-night Continental Escape cruise to Amsterdam departs 15 November 2021, from £963pp.
- 🔗 saga.co.uk

Life is a rollercoaster

Carnival Cruise Line will be making history with its latest addition, *Mardi Gras*, which is to feature the first rollercoaster at sea. *Mardi Gras* will also be the most technologically advanced ship in Carnival's fleet and offer six distinct zones to explore, including a French Quarter, Piazza and the Ultimate Playground. Clients should prepare for buckets of fun.

Details

- An eight-day Eastern Caribbean cruise, round-trip from Port Canaveral, departs 18 December 2021, from approximately £810pp, excluding flights.
- 🔗 carnival.com

Next year, CocoCay comes into its own



Mississippi with Viking

In March this year Viking Cruises announced it will expand its destination-focused travel experiences with the launch of new Mississippi River itineraries. The new state-of-the-art *Viking Mississippi* is scheduled to debut on this mighty river in August 2022 and will feature a reimagining of the chic Scandinavian style for which the line's ocean fleet is known.

Details

● The eight-day Heart of the Delta cruise from Memphis to New Orleans departs 19 November 2022, from £4,490pp.

🔗 vikingcruises.co.uk

Viking is heading for the Mississippi in August 2022



Perfect Day at CocoCay

Having only just launched in January 2020, Royal Caribbean's exclusive private island barely had a chance to showcase itself to the world before having to close its gates. Rest assured, the park is ready to welcome guests for a Perfect Day at CocoCay. It's a staple call when visiting the Caribbean and Bahamas with Royal Caribbean, and CocoCay's creators recognise there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all holiday: it offers everything from the tallest water slide in North America to the perfect spot to unwind among sun, sea and sand.

Details

● A seven-night Perfect Day Bahamas cruise on *Oasis of the Seas*, round-trip from New York, departs 12 September 2021, from approximately £605pp, excluding flights.

🔗 royalcaribbean.com

Enchanted experiences

At the time of writing a new launch date for *Enchanted Princess* has yet to be revealed, but this ship is sure to delight guests when it does arrive. For starters, it will feature Princess Cruises' Ocean Medallion technology and a raft of the line's signature

Fort Lauderdale in Florida will be the start and end point for *Enchanted Princess*



favourites, including the glamorous Italian-inspired Piazza and Movies Under the Stars. *Enchanted Princess* will also have new touches, as well as giving guests a chance to experience the Sky Suite, an ultra-luxury cabin that offers the largest balcony at sea.

Details

● A seven-day Western Caribbean cruise, round-trip from Fort Lauderdale, departs 27 February 2021, from £549pp, excluding flights.

🔗 princess.com

The ultimate voyage

For many, the pinnacle is a world trip, and few do it better than Cunard. Guests can take in awe-inspiring sights in the Caribbean, Australasia, Asia and Africa, all from the comfort and sophistication of the line's *Queen Victoria* – which could be home for 108 nights. The perfect way to recover after time in isolation.

Details

● The 108-night voyage departs 10 January 2021, round-trip from Southampton, from £12,999pp.

🔗 cunard.com

A world voyage with Cunard could take travellers to New Zealand



Winning streak

In this regular series of articles, we profile the winners of the latest Cruise Stars Awards



Tom O'Hara

Marketing Manager
MUNDY CRUISING

How did you feel about winning the travel agent marketing star award?

I was very pleasantly surprised; I wasn't expecting it at all. It's great on an individual level but I think every award helps raise the profile of the agency with trade partners and reminds the cruise lines why they should spend their marketing funds with us.

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

I think we've been quite innovative at Mundy Cruising with our digital marketing. When I joined the company in 2015 we were about to launch a new website but we didn't have much of a digital strategy. SEO has been a big focus for me and we've seen exponential growth in our web traffic over the past few years, to the point where the website is now our biggest source of new business – that's probably the achievement I'm most proud of.

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

Look outside the travel industry for inspiration – sign up to newsletters and follow blogs about digital marketing,



“Data is crucial. Many travel companies still run off unintegrated legacy systems”

make use of the free tools provided by the likes of Google and think about what people are actually looking for online, rather than just what you want to tell them. In addition, data is crucial. A lot of travel companies still rely on legacy systems and run off different databases and platforms that aren't integrated with each other.

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

I was lucky enough to spend a week in the Galápagos on a Silversea ship. It was an incredible place to visit and a real privilege to be a tourist there. I really love the expedition style of cruising.

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

I'd like to see the industry go further and faster on sustainability, and not just the easy wins like getting rid of plastic straws. I'd like to see more investment in hybrid propulsion, shore-side power and anything else that helps to reduce the carbon footprint of our industry.

What is your dream destination for a cruise?

Antarctica, closely followed by the Arctic.

What on-board amenity do you enjoy the most?

My tight-fitting trousers at the end of every cruise would suggest that it's the ice cream bar.

How do you see your career progressing in the future?

I love working in marketing, especially the more creative aspects of the job, so I hope I will continue to progress in my field. If I could also play some part in making the industry more environmentally friendly at the same time, that would be even better. 📌

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ALL TOGETHER NOW

Random acts of kindness have been prevalent across many sectors during the pandemic, and cruise has once again shown just how big its heart is, as **Daniel Bradley** discovers



During times of hardship, there is nothing that restores hope in humanity more than kindness.

Many such tales have emerged following the coronavirus pandemic. They have kept spirits high during these dark times, and many of them have come from the cruise sector. Despite all the difficulties it has encountered, our industry has met these struggles with vigour, kindness and determination.

When it would have been easy to retreat into hibernation, lines and travel agents have instead chosen to stand together and act as a beacon of hope.

Thank you, NHS

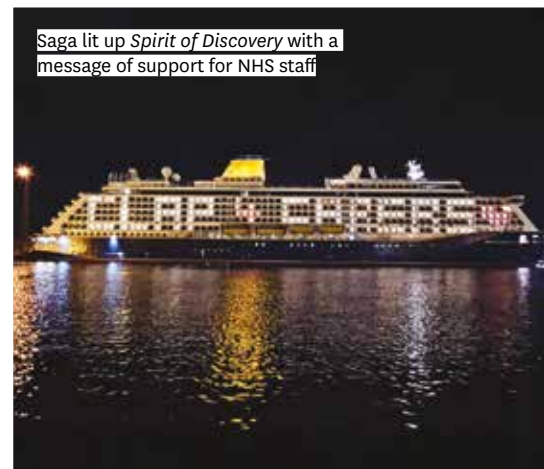
Support for the NHS and frontline key workers has been front and centre of the response, with ships around the UK joining in with the nationwide Thursday

Ships around the UK sounded their horns to add to the nationwide Thursday evening applause

evening applause, sounding their horns and lighting up the dusk with inspirational messages of support.

One of the first cruise lines to kick things off was Saga Cruises, which lit up *Spirit of Discovery* with a message of solidarity for the NHS. This was followed closely by Princess Cruises, which beamed the message 'We Will Be Back' from the balcony cabins of *Sky Princess* after the suspension of sailings had been confirmed.

In Southampton, Cunard's ship *Queen Mary 2* and P&O Cruises' *Britannia* also joined in the chorus of horns. Meanwhile, at anchor in the Firth



of Forth, Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' four ocean ships also sounded their horns in unison at 8pm on Thursdays.

Indeed, staff of the British cruise line have been far from idle during lockdown.

Along with launching its virtual cruising programme to keep guests entertained as they wait to sail again, some staff members set themselves the challenge of walking, running, swimming or cycling a distance equivalent to a world cruise in a bid to raise £1,000 for NHS Charities Together.

The Around the World Challenge has encouraged people to see how far they

can go under their own steam. As of the end of June, the team had covered 10,825 miles, approximately 44 per cent of the distance around the world.

In March, ROL Cruise set itself a target of raising £100,000 for the NHS Charities Together campaign. Company directors and staff said they wanted to donate the money to support local patients, staff and services. Incredibly, the target was hit at the end of June. ROL Cruise MD Sarah Wikevand said: "We are so proud to have been able to raise over £100,000 for the NHS and care partnerships, and are delighted to hear the difference it will make across such a wide spectrum of services that are supporting people living with the impact of coronavirus.

"NHS staff and volunteers are doing such amazing work in caring for Covid-19 patients and their families, and we are very thankful that we have been able to show our support. I would also like to extend our thanks to our cruising customers whose support has enabled us to reach the fundraising target so quickly."

Meanwhile, when river cruise line CroisiEurope heard The Pompidou Hospital in Paris had to bring nurses in from further afield to help manage the coronavirus pandemic, it offered the hospital the use of its ship, *MS Botticelli*, to assist the operation.

Carnival Corporation similarly offered several ships for use as hospitals for non-Covid-19 patients to help relieve the pressure on land-based medical facilities.

Heartfelt appreciation

To give frontline workers something to look forward to once the pandemic is over, AmaWaterways has offered a complimentary river cruise as "a gesture of the company's heartfelt appreciation for the selfless sacrifices made by so many amid these unprecedented times".

When it comes to donations, Fred Olsen has contributed more than £33,000 worth of food to causes in need in Scotland while its ships are in lay-up in Rosyth. In this project it has had the help of food distribution charity

At the end of June, ROL Cruise handed over £100,000 to the NHS



"NHS staff are doing such amazing work. We're very thankful to be able to show our support"

FareShare, which works to support those in difficult circumstances, including isolation, poverty or homelessness.

More than 30 pallets of food have included treats such as jam, biscuits and chocolate, as well as staples like cereals, dried fruits, nuts and seeds, sauces, cured meats, baking supplies, rice and other ingredients.

The donations came from the line's four ocean ships, *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch*, which are currently located at Babcock's Rosyth facilities during the suspension of sailings. The food was again collected by FareShare.

Fred Olsen has also been working with its contacts in Barbados to support local people with a donation of fresh produce from a container of food supplies intended for *Braemar*. A container loaded with 18,000kg of fresh produce was given to island charities.

P&O Cruises' *Ventura* has been supporting food rescue charity

UK Harvest by donating fresh produce to those in need. The line has donated fruit and vegetables to groups across Bognor Regis, Portsmouth, Worthing and Brighton, plus food banks in Eastbourne, Hastings, Crawley, Croydon and Southampton.

Of course, this is by no means an exhaustive account of all the industry has done. It does, however, demonstrate that even through the most turbulent of times, cruise continues to bring smiles to many faces. 🍷



The Wintergarden aboard *Viking Sky* has the Scandi-chic vibe characteristic of the ship



Sky's the **LIMIT**

On a taster cruise with Viking Cruises earlier this year, **Vicky Mayer** marvels at Miami and discovers the delights of underrated Belize

Think of a classic Caribbean cruise and images of white sandy beaches, rum shacks and jungle-thronged volcanoes will spring to mind. Now turn that on its head and replace it with pastel-hued Deco hotels, six-toed cats and jaw-dropping Mayan pyramids and temples.

Viking Cruises' 14-night Panama Canal & Central America itinerary offers travellers the chance to sail aboard *Viking Sky* to some amazing Caribbean and Central American destinations, including Belize, the Panama Canal and Mexico on a port-heavy round-trip from Miami. And today, that's exactly what I am doing.

As a first-time Viking ocean cruiser, I am intrigued to find out why the line has such a high number of repeat cruisers, and so I set off for five days on *Viking Sky*.

I soon discover an elegant ship decorated in chic Nordic style that offers its guests plenty to do on board. Its complimentary shore excursions are just as impressive, and the unusual itinerary is perfect for those of us Brits who have yet to visit this part of the world.

Maybe it's got something to do with watching too much *Miami Vice* as a teenager, but as I fly to Florida's glamorous Art Deco city, I realise how

The unusual itinerary is perfect for those of us Brits who have yet to visit this part of the world



The main pool can be open to the sky for unrivalled sightseeing opportunities



Colourful Miami makes a glamorous stop-off point

lucky I am to be visiting one of the world's most alluring destinations.

The city is a glorious mix of early 20th-century hotels and the modern beat of Cuban-inspired bars and restaurants. Luckily, this is a walking city, and it's a joy to spend a couple of hours wandering the wide streets around famous Ocean Drive and South Beach. These areas are the best examples of Miami's Art Deco architecture, and feature plenty of great venues serving sizzling fish tacos and fiery Miami Mule cocktails.

Luxury on board

Half a day in Miami gives me a taster of this incredible city but I cannot wait to step on board the ship. Right from the start, I am not disappointed. From my roomy stateroom with a deluxe veranda to the seriously impressive Explorers' Lounge on deck seven, *Viking Sky* feels like an amazing floating five-star hotel.

It's no wonder the mainly American guests on board can't wait to tell me how

Selling TIPS

Viking's excursions – many of which are included in the cruise fare – are highly commended for their authenticity and opportunities for guests to take in local cultures and meet local people

Viking's ocean ships are all identical – if clients enjoy their experience on one Viking vessel, they can be confident of the same service and amenities on others in the fleet

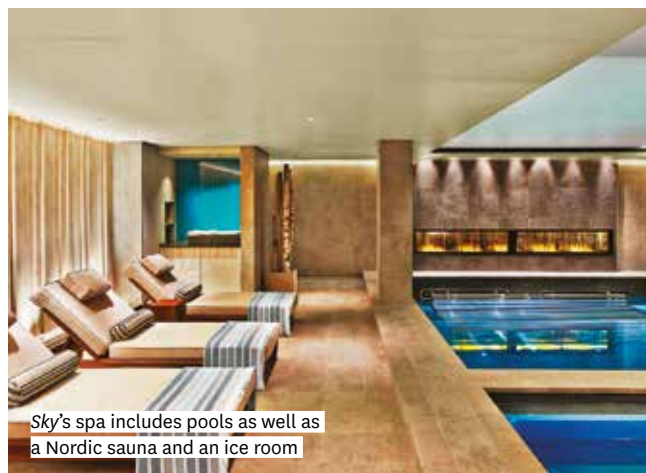
All Viking ships are small, offering a personal, intimate service. However, when guests are on board it never feels crowded



Viking Sky offers a five-star home from home for those on board



The ship has plenty of venues for a sundowner with a sea view



Sky's spa includes pools as well as a Nordic sauna and an ice room

they will not sail with any other line. With only 930 passengers on this roomy ship, it's easy to find a quiet spot by the pool or in the library to relax in, making sea days a total pleasure.

As for the food on board, the choice is impressive, and the quality is high, from the impressive buffet through to the four great on-board restaurants, including The Chef's Table and Mamsen's. My favourite is Italian restaurant Manfredi's, where the steak is legendary. But just how good can a steak be? Marinated with 10 ingredients for 48 hours, it's big, juicy and incredibly succulent – I have never tasted a steak like it, so beg, borrow or steal a reservation here.

But it's not only the great restaurants that keep guests entertained. On one memorable evening I enjoy the ship's signature Nordic Experience.

In the roomy spa I dash between the steamy sauna and freezing 'snow' room, screaming as the temperature suddenly

Just how good can a steak be? Marinated in 10 ingredients for 48 hours, it's big, juicy and incredibly succulent

changes. Is it enjoyable? Without doubt – especially the end of the session where I am cocooned in a warm bathrobe to enjoy a head massage. Heavenly.

Epic excursions

While Viking excels with its on-board offering, it also offers a comprehensive and inclusive shore excursion programme. I experience this first hand while we are in Key West.

Viking's included excursion for this leg of the cruise is a hop on/off conch train tour of the town to major sites including

the 90 miles to Cuba monument and Harry S Truman's Little White House.

The shopping opportunities here are pretty good and there are some great outlet shops, including Coach and Banana Republic. I also love wandering the streets of the old town to admire the island's classic homes with their shady porches, metal roofs and lush green gardens.

Key West is great fun, but the absolute highlight of my cruise is the visit to the 800AD Xunantunich Mayan Temple in sparsely populated Belize. The two-hour bus journey from lively Belize City to the temple is mesmerising. Looking through the window, I spot brilliantly painted houses, swaying palm trees, goats and horses, and smartly dressed schoolchildren heading off to their lessons.

The journey passes quickly and when we arrive, there are plenty of locals to greet us with shops selling funky bags, wooden masks and colourful friendship bracelets.

The mysterious Mayans lived in Belize for more than 5,000 years and there are many remarkable ruins of their temples scattered around the country. I climb to the top of the main temple, from where the view is spectacular – with buildings and jungle as far as the eye can see.

However, despite the epic experiences I enjoy while off the ship, there's nothing better than returning to *Viking Sky*, a luxurious, perfect home for any cruiser. ❶

Details

● **15-day** Panama Canal & Central America voyage on *Viking Sky*, including stops at Key West, Belize and Puerto Limón, departing 17 January 2021. Prices from £4,990pp.

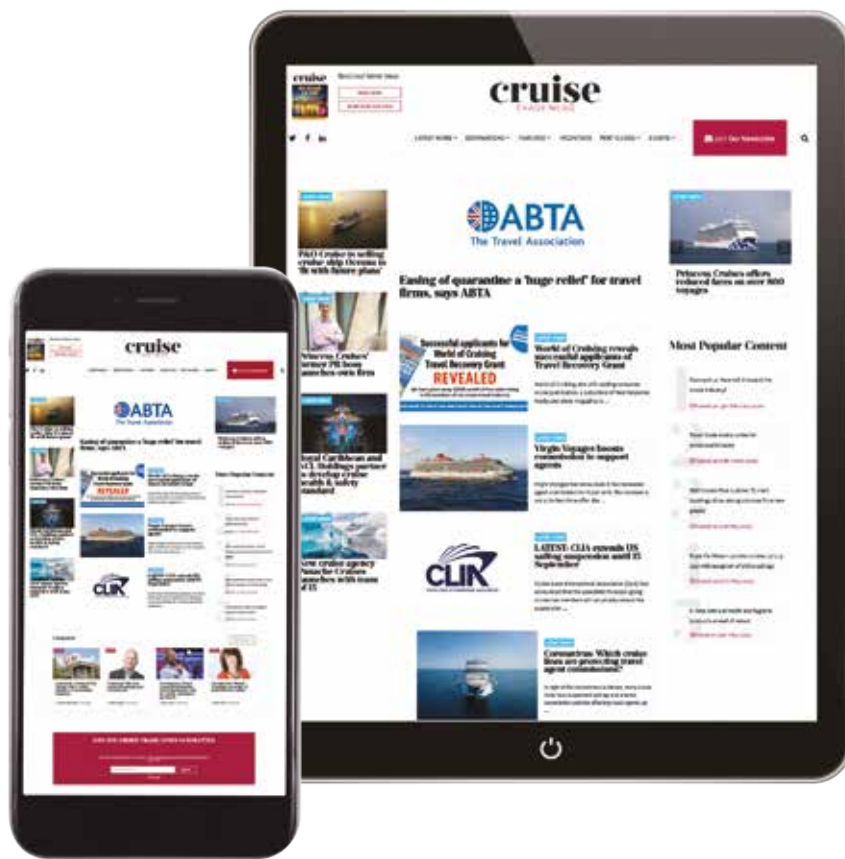
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Excursions could include visits to the area's amazing beaches

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THE LAST WORD

Ian Diaper, head of operations at Portsmouth International Port, has worked in the cruise industry for more than 25 years. Here he shares his thoughts on how the sector can bounce back



Just a few short months ago, if someone had said that this situation would be our new reality, I'm sure we would all have wondered how we'd be able to cope. However, I have been so impressed with how quickly we've changed our approach, during what is a difficult time in our home lives, too.

As everywhere, the rule book has changed. I'm sure cruise lines are looking at what capacity is financially viable, while also meeting social distancing guidance.

Fortunately, because the industry has such a loyal following, customers will be willing to adapt. This is the ace up our sleeve.

At Portsmouth Port, while we have of course had fewer passengers, we've had ships arrive and have been honoured to step up and help with cruise repatriation. It's been busy behind the scenes, as I

expect it has for most ports. Everyone has played a critical role and I couldn't be more proud of my team.

Closer to home

There has been much talk about the rise of staycations and the restrictions over travel. I believe that UK-based itineraries for smaller to medium-sized vessels could really prove to be a benefit when operations start up again.

From the highlands of Scotland and rugged coastlines to large ports like ours – and everything in between – UK itineraries really suit ships that can choose from a range of ports.

Here in Portsmouth we are fortunate to have many world-class attractions and we've been talking to them about providing exclusive visits for guests. We've also been speaking to government departments, stressing the importance of the cruise business to the UK economy

“In Portsmouth we've been talking to our world-class attractions about exclusive visits for guests”

and reaching out to our stakeholders to help support the message.

All ports should look to work together to help create UK itineraries, but this will only work if there are enough options for the customers and reduced steaming time.

Taking temperature

Speaking of options, last year we started a multimillion-pound berth extension, to provide the capacity to welcome more guests and ships of up to (and potentially over) 255m. We have managed to continue this work during recent months.

Our new gangway is also on order and it will be wonderful to see the first cruise ship alongside as soon as possible. We are still looking at transforming our facilities, to adapt to changes in the industry and reflect what our customers really need.

What's more, in May we were the first UK port to implement a temperature check camera, an optional extra for lines to help minimise infection on board. Other health and safety measures include full-face PPE for customer-facing staff and clinical-level door-handle sanitation.

Hopefully ports like ours will be able to continue to demonstrate our importance as we look to the future. 📍



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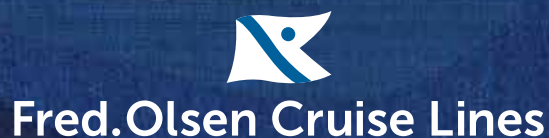
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