

cruisetradenews.com

JUNE/JULY 2022

cruise

TRADE NEWS

LUXURY CRUISING SPECIAL



A LUXURY EVOLUTION

Changes are afoot, but what do
they mean for luxury clients?

In association with


EMERALD
CRUISES

THE Sail AWAY EVENT

16 JUNE - 31 AUGUST 2022

That moment when the best things in life really are free.

When your clients take off on a Seabourn voyage, they'll wake up to a whole new view. Book them on selected voyages departing between October 2022 and November 2023, and they'll enjoy a complimentary two-category veranda suite upgrade - with a reduced deposit - from just £250 per person.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES



14-night Exotic Caribbean In-Depth Roundtrip Barbados

Fly/cruise (with inclusive air)
from £6,799 pp

Seabourn Ovation

7, 21* Jan; 4, 18 Feb; 4 Mar 2023

Visits:

Port Elizabeth (Bequia); Trois Ilets (Martinique); Basseterre (Guadeloupe); Charlestown (Nevis); St Johns Antigua; Carambola Beach (St Kitts & Nevis); Philipsburg (St Maarten); Sopers Hole (Frenchmans Cay); Basseterre (St Kitts & Nevis); Gustavia (St Barts); Terre-de-Haut (Iles des Saintes); Rodney Bay (St Lucia); Saline Bay (Mayreau)

*lead in fare based on 21/1/23

16-night Australia & New Zealand Sydney to Auckland (or reverse~)

Cruise from £6,199pp.
Fly/cruise from £8,299

Seabourn Odyssey

5*, 21~ Dec 2022;
6, 22~ Jan; 7 Feb 2023

Visits:

Phillip Island; Melbourne; Milford Sound & Cruising Fjordland National Park (New Zealand); Oban (Halfmoon Bay); Port Chalmers (Dunedin); Timaru; Kaikoura; Picton; Wellington; Matatia Bay.

*lead in fare based on 5/12/22



12-night Sailing the Humboldt Route Callao (Lima) to San Antonio (Santiago)

Cruise from £6,999pp.
Fly/cruise from £8,299

Seabourn Venture

26 Oct 2022

Visits:

Islas Ballestas (Peru); General San Martin (Pisco); Matarani; Arica (Chile); Iquique; Antofagasta; Isla Pan du Azucar; Isla Choros; Coquimbo (La Serena)



THE SEABOURN DIFFERENCE

- Intimate ships with a private club atmosphere
- Intuitive, personalised service provided by staff passionate about exceeding guests' expectations
- Complimentary premium spirits and fine wines available on board at all times
- All ocean-front suites, luxuriously appointed
- Welcome Champagne and complimentary in-suite bar stocked with guests' preferences
- World-class dining, further enhanced through a culinary partnership with Chef Thomas Keller
- Tipping is neither required, nor expected
- All dining venues are complimentary, guests may dine where, when and with whom they wish
- Shopping with the Chef small group excursions and local entertainment

CONTACT YOUR SEABOURN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM | CALL 0344 338 8614 | EMAIL: SALESSUPPORT@SEABOURN.CO.UK



Terms & Conditions: *Featured prices are per guest based on double occupancy and promo codes NB, JE & JB. Prices are inclusive of Cruise Fare, Taxes, Fees & Port Expenses in Pounds Sterling. All savings amounts are included in the prices shown. Complimentary Veranda Suite Upgrades are subject to availability at time of booking. Upgrade will be reflected in fare paid for selected Suite category. Reduced Deposit offer is valid on select sailings that are outside of standard penalty periods. Reduced Deposit amounts vary by class of ship: Ocean Fleet Seabourn Odyssey, Seabourn Sojourn, Seabourn Quest, Seabourn Encore and Seabourn Ovation reduced deposit of £250 per guest; Expedition Fleet Seabourn Venture and Seabourn Pursuit reduced deposit of £500 per guest. Reduced Deposit offer is based on promo DD. Europe and Caribbean Inclusive Air offers are subject to availability, valid only for guests residing in the UK and applicable to the first and second guests sharing a Suite only. In the event that promotional Air is not available (at the sole discretion of Seabourn) or for guests not wishing to utilize the promotional air offers, a cruise credit will be applied to the booking amount. Promotional air offers include complimentary transfers between airport and ship and in case of an airline delay or cancellation, next port protection. If promotional air flight(s) and/or cruise schedule(s) force an overnight, a complimentary hotel night is included. Promotional Economy Class Air offer is based on promo code JE and promotional Business Class Air offer is based on promo code JB. All offers are capacity controlled and may be modified or withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Other restrictions may apply. Seabourn reserves the right to correct errors. Ships' registry: Bahamas. ©2022 Seabourn.



Travel with confidence



EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR
Gary Peters
gary.peters@realresponsemedia.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Colette Doyle
Dave Monk

ART DIRECTOR
Phil Couzens

SUB EDITOR
Heather Ford

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Barnaby Moore

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Mark Bennett
mark.bennett@realresponsemedia.com

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Keith Cartwright
keith.cartwright@realresponsemedia.com

COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Suzanne Halil
suzanne.halil@realresponsemedia.com

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Lina Slater

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
James Gambling

CEO
Chris Pitchford

For subscriptions & enquiries:
020 8444 2554

info@cruisetradenews.com

All enquiries
+44 (0) 20 8444 2554

Printed in the United Kingdom by Micropress.
Reproduction is not permitted without the express written consent of the editor.
All efforts are made to ensure that factual accuracy is correct at time of publication.

cruise
TRADE NEWS

Published by

Real.
RESPONSE MEDIA

Unit 4D, Cally Yard
445 Caledonian Road
London, N7 9BG
ISSN 2059-9986



**CONNECT ONLINE WITH
CRUISE TRADE NEWS**

cruisetradenews.com

@cruisetradenews

Cruise Trade News

CONTENTS

LUXURY SUPPLEMENT



Luxury cruising is changing. Previously, there was a clear distinction between those cruise lines

that offered the ultra-luxury experience and those who sat more comfortably in the premium bracket. However, many of those in the latter are beginning to blur those lines, with innovative ship-within-a-ship concepts – such as MSC Cruises' Yacht Club.

Others are also increasing the level of exclusivity on their respective ships in an attempt to offer a more elevated cruise holiday, as you can discover in the main investigation in this special luxury supplement.

We also speak to Oceania Cruises EMEA senior VP and MD Bernard Carter, who provides the latest on the line's OceaniaNEXT programme.

In addition, Star Clippers general manager Fay McCormack takes us through the operator's plans to engage with the trade, while Windstar Cruises' *Star Legend* proves to be a luxurious small-ship experience.

Gary Peters

Editor, Cruise Trade News



6 Updates

The latest luxury news & itineraries



8 Luxury investigation

How the luxury cruise sector is changing

12 Q&A

One-to-one with Oceania Cruises' Bernard Carter

14 Luxury ship review

Sailing on Windstar Cruises' refurbished *Star Legend*

18 Luxury column

How Star Clippers is boosting trade relationships





CUNARD

Welcome to the World.

New voyages now available to book in 2023 and 2024,
including Queen Anne's maiden season.

Cunard World Club members will receive a 5% early booking saving on selected sailings when booked by 1 August 2022. All guests can enjoy a low 5% deposit on selected voyages.

Remember your guests only needs to have sailed once with Cunard to become a Cunard World Club member.



Global adventure awaits.



QUEEN MARY 2

29 new voyages
January - April 2024
Durations: 7 - 123 nights

108 nights Southampton
return Full World Voyage to
South Africa, Australia, Asia
and the Mediterranean

Transit of the Suez Canal

Overnight stays in
Cape Town, Melbourne,
Sydney, Hong Kong,
Singapore and Dubai

Late evening departures from:
Port Elizabeth, Mauritius
and Colombo



QUEEN VICTORIA

30 new voyages
January - April 2024
Durations: 2 - 111 nights

107 night Southampton return
Full World Voyage to
San Francisco and Fiji

Overnight stays in
San Francisco, Honolulu,
Sydney, Hong Kong,
Singapore and Cape Town

Late evening departures from:
Honolulu, Colombo and
Port Elizabeth



QUEEN ELIZABETH

43 new voyages
October 2023 - May 2024
Durations: 2 - 41 nights

Round trip voyages from
Tokyo

Extended explorations of
Australia and New Zealand

Christmas and New Year
voyage to New Zealand

Overnight stays in Wellington,
Hobart and Auckland

Late evening departures from:
Safaga, Colombo, Fremantle,
Hobart, Sydney, Auckland
and Tokyo



QUEEN ANNE

11 new voyages
January - April 2024
Durations: 7 - 35 nights

A magical maiden season
visiting destinations including
the Canary Islands, New York,
the Norwegian fjords and
the Caribbean

Special guest appearances
from some prestigious faces in
the worlds of art and literature

Overnight stays in Lisbon,
Funchal Madeira,
Tromsø and Narvik

Late evening departures from:
Bridgetown and Barcelona



New voyages mean new opportunities to earn Shine points.

All Cunard Fare bookings made and played on our online deck game earn Shine points.

You can also find the latest Queen Anne news, access training and test yourself
and earn more Shine points with our quizzes.

Visit Shinerewardsclub.com for more information.



NEWS & ITINERARIES



SEABOURN HIGHLIGHTS 'EXTRAORDINARY' ADVENTURES

Seabourn is set to explore “extraordinary worlds of natural beauty and cultural wonder” in the Caribbean, Central America and Hawaii throughout autumn 2023.

The season will feature the line's first-ever Hawaiian holiday sailing, as well as combination voyages on *Seabourn Quest*, *Seabourn Sojourn* and *Seabourn Ovation*.

The 20-day Allure of Aloha Holiday on *Seabourn Sojourn* will depart 22 December 2023, roundtrip from Los Angeles. Following a call at Catalina Island, the ship will spend five days sailing the Pacific Ocean en route to a six-day stay in Hawaii.

Seabourn president Josh Leibowitz said: “Our new autumn 2023 voyages are ideal for travellers seeking new experiences with an active-luxury feel, including our first-ever holiday voyage to the beautiful Hawaiian Islands.”



WINDSTAR RESUMES FULL OPERATIONS

Windstar Cruises has announced that its final Star Plus ship *Star Pride* has resumed passenger operations.

The vessel departed Athens on an eight-day voyage to Barcelona, calling at ports including Gythion, Corfu, Argostoli, Messina (Taormina), Trapani and Cagliari.

Star Pride is the third of the Windstar Star Plus yachts to undergo a complex lengthening and transformation project, joining *Star Breeze* and *Star Legend*.

Star Breeze was the first to launch in June 2021, followed by *Star Legend* in September. All ships feature new suites and expanded outdoor and indoor public spaces. Capacity has increased from 212 guests to 312.

Windstar said they are now more environmentally friendly with new efficient engines and generators. Windstar president Christopher Prelog said: “To have completed this project amidst a global pandemic is nothing short of amazing.”



As Explora adds to its fleet, it's also strengthening its commercial team

Explora expands UK team

Explora Journeys has strengthened its UK and Europe commercial team. Former Quark Expeditions business development manager Andrew Schweitzer joins as UK and Ireland business relationship lead, based in London, while Natalie Dorrington, formerly with The Cruise Portfolio as marketing manager, takes up the position of global trade marketing expert, again in London.

Former Crystal Cruises director of sales international Suzanne Kochen will be based in Amsterdam as head of sales for northern Europe. The southern

Europe head of sales role, meanwhile, has been filled by Paul Potrykus, who was previously Rosewood Hotels & Resorts director of global sales.

Ex-Seabourn and Holland America Line sales representative Daniel Zink has been appointed as business relationship lead DACH, based in Cologne.

Former Celebrity Cruises, Azamara and Silversea key account manager Gabriele Cornalba has joined Explora in a business relationship lead position, and Sophia Weiss, a former Royal Caribbean sales admin executive, comes in as sales excellence specialist.



Oceania is adding Beppu in Japan to its 2024 ports of call

Oceania reveals 2024 collection

Oceania Cruises' 2024 Voyage Collection will visit Europe, Alaska, Canada, Asia, Australia & New Zealand, Africa, South America, the South Pacific and the Caribbean.

The line will operate 350 itineraries, ranging from seven to 82 days in length, as well as more than 130 Grand Voyages across seven ships.

Regatta, *Insignia* and *Nautica* will offer up to three dozen explorations of Alaska, New England, Canada, Bermuda and the US colonial south, while *Riviera* will operate its inaugural season of sailings to Arabia, India, Asia, Japan and the Philippines. There will also be new ports of call, including Beppu, Japan, and Bluff, New Zealand.



AmaDara will once again sail the exotic Mekong from October

AMAWATERWAYS TO RESTART MEKONG CRUISES

AmaWaterways will make its return to sailing on the Mekong this October, the line has confirmed.

Sales are now open for itineraries through Vietnam and Cambodia on the 124-passenger *AmaDara*. The eight-day or seven-night river cruise itineraries can be combined with pre- or post-cruise land packages in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay (for an exclusive overnight stay), Ho Chi Minh City or Siem Reap.

AmaWaterways MD Jamie Loizou said: "As their confidence returns,

travellers are looking for authentic experiences in exotic destinations and the Mekong offers something for everyone: beautiful cruising, wonderful people, charming remote towns and exciting cities.

"We are delighted to be returning to the Mekong. We are seeing strong forward bookings for 2023 and 2024 and, with entry regulations easing, it isn't too late to travel to this spectacular part of the world in 2022."



Emerald Azzurra provides a private-yacht experience

A LUXURY EVOLUTION

Luxury cruising is changing, as lines expand their offerings to reach discerning clients. **Dave Monk** reports

Silversea's new Otium wellness regime encourages guests to enjoy some pampering

Seabourn Venture carries two six-seater submarines for underwater explorations

Ask a person in the street – or a newspaper headline writer – and they'd probably tell you all cruise ships are 'luxury'. But within the industry there has always been a distinct difference between high-end operators with their butlers, acres of marble and spacious suites and the rest of the market, broadly split into 'premium' and 'budget' lines.

In 2022, this neat classification is becoming ever more blurred. Mass-market brand MSC Cruises is developing its elite 'ship-within-a-ship' concept of the Yacht Club into a new fleet under the name Explora Journeys, with the first ship *Explora I* due to launch next year.

Other lines such as Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line are expanding their own offerings for suite guests with exclusive restaurants, pools and sundecks, while providing all the choice of dining and entertainment of a big ship.

“We’re reaching people who love safaris or touring Australia”

Sister brands Scenic and Emerald are also taking to the oceans with opulent craft, beginning with *Scenic Eclipse* and *Emerald Azzurra* respectively.

Speaking following *Azzurra*'s maiden voyage, the line's global director of brand and marketing David Winterton said: “Every once in a while, a new yacht comes along in the industry and changes things. *Emerald Azzurra* is exactly that yacht.

“The level of luxury afforded to each guest, coupled with a diverse sailing programme featuring sailings through the Adriatic Coast, the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea for its inaugural season, is truly groundbreaking.”

Competition emerging

Competition is coming from outside as well, with five-star hotel group Ritz-Carlton about to launch the first of five ships and Atlas Ocean Voyages joining the expedition market. At the same time, other lines such as Saga, Holland America Line, Azamara, Cunard and Viking are also raising the stakes in what they provide.

Even with the demise of Crystal Cruises, the luxury end of cruising is becoming more crowded. So how are brands such as Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Seabourn and Silversea facing the new rivals? How are they expanding

their product and working with agents?

Silversea UK, Ireland, Middle East and Africa MD Peter Shanks says: “In ultra-luxury and expedition cruising there's an optimal ship size – 600 to 700 guests – to deliver the space, an element of privacy and an element of variety.

“A ship has to be big enough to have spacious suites and offer a variety of dining venues, a good spa and pool and a strong variety of bars. Some of the new entrants to the market, which are very small, don't have that space.

“On the other hand, there are some cruise lines that offer the top couple of decks for a more luxurious experience but you're still on a 3,000 to 4,000-passenger ship.”

Another key difference is being all-inclusive, he says, with Silversea looking after everything from a chauffeur pick-up service to the flight, transfer, hotel and a “very wide choice of fine wines, all the fine gins and whiskies, shore excursions and gratuities” on board.

“When you look at the extras on a premium cruise line, I sometimes say, ‘The only thing you don't pay for is oxygen’ - whereas, with Silversea, when you look at what's included, the value for money is a lot closer than people might think,” Shanks adds.

The final difference is offering exotic destinations. Shanks explains: “We're reaching people who love safaris, or Asian holidays or touring Australia. With a smaller ship you can get to those destinations that others can't. Luxury is about space and experiencing incredible places, and that's what we do.”

The ultra-luxurious *Seven Seas Grandeur* will make her debut in November 2023



Details such as the *Silver Nova* pool deck make Silversea “reassuringly expensive”



The lavish Regent suite aboard *Seven Seas Grandeur*

NEW SHIPS ON THE HORIZON

Seven Seas Grandeur

750 PASSENGERS

Following in the wake of *Seven Seas Explorer*, ‘the most luxurious ship ever built’, and sister *Seven Seas Splendor*, the latest arrival from Regent Seven Seas should make her debut in November 2023

Explora I

922 PASSENGERS

The first of four ships from Explora Journeys will make her maiden voyage in May 2023

Ilma

456 PASSENGERS

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will add this ship in 2024 – and a sister the following year – to follow its first class of yachts beginning with *Evrina*

World Seeker

196 PASSENGERS

Atlas Ocean Voyages will be adding to its two-ship fleet, *World Navigator* and *World Traveller*, in 2023

Emerald Sakara

100 GUESTS

The sister ship to *Emerald Azzurra* will take to the seas next year

Silversea is expanding its offering by adding the Sea and Land Taste (S.A.L.T.) dining programme and the Otium wellness regime. Shanks says the line has a strong UK sales team with five regional sales managers.

“Agents have all the customers they need for ultra-luxury and expedition cruises; they just don’t know it. We give them a powerful commercial message that Silversea is reassuringly expensive, a beautiful thing for travel agents. The cruise specialists are brilliant at this, but we’re really working hard to find more independent luxury travel agents. That’s where the biggest opportunity lies now.”

Adding to all-inclusive

Regent Seven Seas, which offers one of the highest space-to-guest ratios in the industry, has added complimentary laundry and dry cleaning to its all-inclusive offering, plus two new types of shore excursion – Behind The Design and Eco-Connect tours.

The line’s EMEA MD Graham Sadler says: “We want to help travel partners to sell our cruises as much as possible, earning them some of the highest commission rates in the travel industry.”

Lynn Narraway, Seabourn MD for UK and Ireland, cites entertainment such as An Evening with Tim Rice and a performance at Ephesus by tenor Jonathan Antoine as part of the line’s special offering. Seabourn is also expanding into the expedition market with two all-veranda ships, *Seabourn Venture* and *Seabourn Pursuit*, that will include a 26-strong team of experts plus

two six-seater submarines (complete with champagne coolers).

Narraway says: “Seabourn has always been committed to working closely with travel agent partners. Our business development team provides in-depth training, webinars, and we support all industry events.

“We encourage agents to sign up for our emails, to take our online training and have relaunched GoSeabourn.co.uk, which offers user-friendly access to all the tools partners need to book, plan, promote and become a brand expert.”

What about the newcomers? Explora Journeys chief commercial sales officer Chris Austin says its five central elements were design, space, choice, destinations and shore experiences “plus an unwavering support for our travel advisor community”. The line is investing in four superyacht-style ships and has lined up more than 20,000 potential



Uniworld Boutique River Cruises has introduced new special excursions

“It’s vital that agents can get hold of account managers or reservation staff quickly”



Mundy Cruising MD Edwina Lonsdale:
“There is a growing interest in sustainability”

guests across the US, UK, western Europe, Japan and China.

Established players also want a share of the prestige market. Royal Caribbean has dedicated a whole neighbourhood to suite guests on new megaship *Wonder of the Seas*. Ben Bouldin, the line’s vice-president EMEA, pointed out the line has more suites than sister brand Silversea. “It’s our upper-end space that sells first.”

Shifting sentiment

On river cruising, AmaWaterways UK MD Jamie Loizou says travellers’ idea of luxury in the past few years had shifted towards enriching and unique experiences, focused on food and wellness and “how guests can personalise their interaction with a destination”.

Meanwhile, Chris Townson, his counterpart at Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, explains that the line is trying to “cut through the overmarketing that’s

prevalent in the sector”. In 2021, the line launched three new ships, on the Douro, Nile and Veneto region of Italy. It has introduced mystery cruises, and combined land journeys as well as special nights out such as an after-hours visit to St Mark’s Basilica.

Other lines, such as Riviera Travel, are also pulling out all the stops to improve the overall experience for guests.

Asked what luxury customers are looking for, Mundy Cruising MD Edwina Lonsdale explains: “A unique combination of space and intimacy, high levels of recognition, the opportunity to travel away from the crowds and a slower, more in-depth experience, with time to enjoy meeting local people and understand more about their cultures.

“There is also a growing interest in sustainability – not just technology but also increasingly the benefits of reducing the negative impacts of tourism.”

Lonsdale believes top-end pricing has increased significantly and cruise lines need agents who can justify to passengers why they should spend £1,500 a day or more, adding: “You have to be able to enter the mindset of the luxury buyer.”

As for how luxury lines have supported agents, Panache Cruises founder and MD James Cole highlights their “unwavering commitment to their retail partners by protecting commission”.

Scott Anderson, luxury cruise specialist and now partnerships manager at Widgety, says: “Agents want support by way of great training, accessible customisable marketing materials, easy-to-use websites and great offers. It’s vital that agents can get hold of account managers or reservation staff quickly and without being on hold for ages.”

Onwards & UPWARDS

Oceania Cruises EMEA senior VP and MD **Bernard Carter** discusses the line's ongoing OceaniaNEXT project and how luxury cruising is evolving

Can you talk us through some of the latest OceaniaNEXT enhancements?

The \$100+million programme of enhancements continues apace. *Nautica* restarted sailings on 1 April 2022, completing the rebuild of the four 684-guest Regatta-class ships and marking full return to service with all six ships sailing with guests once again.

The next phase sees the re-inspiration of our two larger ships, *Riviera* and *Marina*, which will make their debuts in December 2022 and November 2023 respectively. In addition to the full transformation of the fleet, we are introducing new solo staterooms on the four smaller ships, plus two new series of excursions, Go Green and Beyond Blueprints, which offer a more immersive experience.



Riviera's Baristas bar allows guests to indulge in a range of coffees and pastries



**BERNARD
CARTER**

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT & MD EMEA
OCEANIA CRUISES

What makes that project different to other renovation concepts that we see across the sector?

OceaniaNEXT is all about taking our product to a whole new level, better than it has ever been before, as we always strive to find ways of improving the guest experience. For example, Oceania Cruises is renowned for the finest cuisine at sea, yet we do not rest on our laurels. Over the past two years, we have introduced a wide range of new menus and culinary offerings in all on-board venues, including the expansion of options for stateroom dining.

How is work progressing on *Vista*, your new ship?

We are so excited to welcome *Vista* to the fleet in April 2023, our first new ship in more than a decade. Work is progressing well and we are looking forward to her inaugural season, with plans underway for a series of trade events to showcase her to our travel partners.

How will *Vista* improve on what Oceania currently offers?

Vista is the first of an entirely new class of ship for Oceania Cruises. Her sister ship will join the fleet in 2025. *Vista* will



“OceaniaNEXT is about taking our product to a whole new level... we always strive to find ways to improve the guest experience”

have no inside staterooms and will boast more culinary venues than any of our other ships, including two new concept restaurants.

How are UK sales looking at present?

The UK has weathered the pandemic better than a lot of countries, but we have witnessed how hard the impact has been on our travel partners. We have made sure that we have been there for them throughout, protecting commissions, ensuring timely refunds and generally helping however we can. It is great to see that, even with current global uncertainties, the market is returning.

Forward demand continues to strengthen. We have seen two 180-day Around The World launches fill in a single day (one in 30 minutes). In addition, we had a record booking day, both globally and in the UK, for *Vista*'s sales launch; and most recently we have created another new record booking day for our double-season launch on 4 May.

Demand is also strong for 2022 sailings. We kept our powder dry for some time, with high booking levels and a stated desire to concentrate on lower guest numbers to ensure that even the first returning guests would receive the signature Oceania Cruises experience.

What do you have in the pipeline in terms of trade support?

We launched an OLife Ultimate promotion on a number of 2022 sailings, combining this with increased points on our travel agent rewards programme plus an amazing Sell & Sail programme, which gives travel partners the chance to sail with us in 2022 once they have made four eligible, confirmed bookings on 2022 sailings. Understandably, this has been a massive success.

You've had some changes in the UK sales team – how is that new structure helping you to support agents?

We restructured the UK sales team to ensure delivery of the best support to our valued trade partners, and it is going well, with great feedback from across the commercial spectrum.

Louise Craddock was promoted to sales director UK and Ireland, while Lisa Clarkson will continue to manage and develop our national accounts and consortia. Alex Farquharson moved up to senior manager key accounts; James Scott is now sales manager south; and we appointed David Sanderson as sales manager north, Scotland and Ireland, who joined from our sister brand NCL.

It seems that luxury cruising is always evolving – what do you think the next big innovation will be?

Put simply, people want choice more than ever. Our needs are evolving, spurred on by the pandemic, and there has been a global re-evaluation of our personal priorities. Cruising is by virtue a luxury and inclusive experience. What everyone sees as most important, as most special to them, is diversifying rapidly. Cruise will continue to evolve, and the next 5-10 years will be the most exciting yet. ①

Oceania Cruises is renowned for the finest cuisine at sea



A stop in Sicily allows time to enjoy the picturesque Taormina village and the legendary Mount Etna



Star QUALITY

Colette Doyle boards Windstar Cruises' *Star Legend* after its multimillion-dollar makeover to sample the ultimate small-ship experience



The pool and whirlpool, accessible from both upper decks, with an expanded sun deck



The Old Cagliari fish market in Sardinia, considered Italy's largest covered fish market

The word “transformation” may initially make you think of some dubious makeover on a ratings-grabbing reality show, but in the context of Seattle-based Windstar Cruises the term has a much more positive connotation.

Its ship *Star Legend* recently underwent a \$250 million refurbishment programme called the Star Plus Initiative. The renovation inserted a brand-new section into the ship, adding 50 new suites, plus reimagined public spaces and additional amenities, thereby increasing passenger capacity by almost 50 per cent to 312 guests in total.

All the suites feature French balconies and delightful touches such as fresh flowers, L'Occitane bath products and a bathrobe with slippers, while the premium suites additionally offer complimentary wifi, an Illy coffee machine and a bottle of prosecco on arrival, as well

“When it comes to dining, despite its petite size, *Star Legend* offers plenty of choice”

as that prized staple of cruise life: an invitation to dine with the captain.

When it comes to dining, despite its relatively petite size, *Star Legend* offers plenty of choice and now benefits from two entirely new restaurants: US TV chef Steven Raichlen's Star Grill, an outdoor barbecue concept serving lunch, and Cuadro 44, which dishes up tapas created by Anthony Sasso, one of the youngest-ever chefs to be recognized by the Michelin Guide.

I eat at the latter on my first night on board and, as a lover of small plates, I'm in raptures at the way I can order so many enticing little treats without having to worry about the bill (all speciality restaurants on board are free of charge). I quickly set about sampling such superb Spanish delicacies such as jamón ibérico, tortilla, patatas bravas, paella-filled croquettes and grilled chorizo.

The other speciality restaurant on board is Candles; during the day, this operates as buffet outlet Veranda, serving a huge selection of salads, cold cuts and cheeses, as well as a choice of hot dishes including burgers, hot dogs and a live cooking station that changes daily. At night, however, it becomes an upscale steakhouse, serving the likes of filet mignon cooked to order (mine was a perfect medium rare, chargrilled on the



The Star Grill, an outdoor dining concept serving lunch

outside but pink and juicy on the inside), as well as signature starters such as butter-poached shrimp, New England clam chowder and that steakhouse classic, creamy Caesar salad.

A personal touch

Even though it might be an unlikely scenario, given the plethora of food on offer at breakfast and lunch, those who find themselves peckish in between mealtimes can try out the Yacht Club Café located on deck eight, which offers a tempting array of sandwiches and cakes all afternoon.

In fact, food is at the heart of the Windstar experience: it is the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation. This is a US non-profit organisation whose epicurean mission is “to celebrate, support and elevate the people behind America's food culture and champion a standard of good food anchored in talent, equity and



Cuadro 44 dishes up tapas created by star chef Anthony Sasso

Luxury ship review



Sardinia's colourful coastline, with its brightly painted villages and azure waters



The Yacht Club Café is perfect for casual daytime dining

sustainability". Every evening the main dining room, Amphora, serves up a couple of dishes specially prepared by chefs affiliated with the foundation. On one of the occasions I visited, a cauliflower panzanella salad was on offer as a starter, followed by pan-seared scallops in a Thai green curry sauce as a main course.

The newly constructed Amphora on deck three is testimony to how investment in the Star Plus Initiative has been money well spent.

Despite the fact that Windstar has been going for more than a quarter of a century in the US, it is hitherto little known in the UK – hence the appointment of

"A Windstar voyage is proof positive that good things really do come in small packages"

Anna Perrot, who previously worked at Travelbag, as business development manager. Steven Kona Simao, the line's VP of sales, is animated about Windstar's desire to work with UK agents and share with them a product that has such "great potential". In fact, agents will be crucial to the line's success in the UK, as customers will need to book via the trade.



All Star Legend suites feature French balconies

SELLING TIPS

Highlight to clients that Windstar Cruises' Star Plus Initiative has breathed new life into its fleet, with exciting additions on board

•

Despite the relatively small size of its ships, Windstar offers an array of dining options to suit all needs. A small ship need not mean a reduction in choice for guests sailing with this line

•

Windstar offers both laid-back sea days and adventurous activities – ideal for those clients who want relaxation and fun in one cruise

Good things, small packages

Entertainment on board is low-key and guests won't see the kind of West End-style shows that can be found on those ships of more mammoth proportions. Instead, three venues, the Lounge, Star Bar and Compass Rose, offer a mix of gentle humour, a medley of Broadway melodies and the sweet sounds of the Infinite Groove band.

On sea days, guests can check out the soothing environment of the spa: massages include Swedish and deep tissue, as well as ones using seaweed or a Thai herbal poultice.

More adventurous types should head for the watersports platform. When the ship is anchored and weather conditions are right, this is the departure point for kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, windsurfing and water skiing (all at no extra charge).

With so much fun stuff happening on board, guests might never want to get off,

but that would be a real pity as the itinerary is carefully curated. After the iconic sights of Barcelona we sail into Sardinia, where destination manager Felipe takes guests on a tour of the fish market in Cagliari; in Sicily, meanwhile, Windstar guests can discover Mount Etna by cable car.

Three destinations in Greece are up next: Argostoli, Katakolon and then Crete – the country's largest island and the fifth-largest in the entire Mediterranean – before the ship finally docks in that bastion of ancient culture, Athens.

All in all, a Windstar voyage is proof positive that good things really do come in small packages. ①

DETAILS

● The eight-day A Piece of Greece and a Slice of Sicily cruise departs Barcelona on 16 April 2023. Prices start from approximately £3,285pp, all-inclusive fare.

MENTON, FRANCE

FOR UNRIVALED ACCESS TO EUROPE, WINDSTAR KNOWS THE WAY



WIND YACHTS

STAR PLUS YACHTS

Our sailing and all-suite yachts deliver just 148 to 342 guests to nearly 75 itineraries and more than 150 iconic European ports in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Iceland, Norway, and many others. Your clients have opportunities to immerse themselves in a more personalized Europe for an All-Inclusive experience that's 180 degrees from ordinary.

Windstar Knows the Way to Holiday! Book your clients by 31 July for All-Inclusive savings!

www.WindstarCruises.com/ukholidaysale.

To find your way to Windstar please call 0808 178 2233 or email windstar@cruiseline.co.uk.

WINDSTAR®
CRUISES
180° FROM ORDINARY®

Shining a spotlight on the trade

Star Clippers UK general manager **Fay McCormack** provides an insight into the specialist cruise line's latest trade initiatives and its highly anticipated return to Costa Rica

At a time when travellers are feeling more adventurous than ever, Star Clippers offers bold and explorative experiences alongside comfort and luxury – a combination that we as a specialist cruise line have proudly executed for over three decades.

As a fleet of three beautiful clipper ships, fitted with 1920s-themed interiors while boasting all the mod cons of a mega yacht, we are proud to be the pioneers of tall-ship sailing. Our focus on laid-back, barefoot luxury attracts guests that are happy to venture off the beaten track without compromising on comfort standards.

With more than 65 per cent of our guests booking their next cruise with us within two years of returning home, it is clear that we offer an experience that leaves guests wanting more. We love that guests can get hands-on and involved with true tall-ship sailing without sacrificing any of the amenities they would expect on a luxury mega yacht.

Our flagship, *Royal Clipper*, holds 227 guests while *Star Flyer* and *Star Clipper* both hold 166, meaning the ships can reach smaller ports of call brimming



The Star Clippers fleet boasts all the mod cons of a mega yacht

“Star Clippers offers bold and explorative experiences alongside comfort and luxury”

with undiscovered and hidden gems. With a 2:1 guest to crew ratio, the service is second-to-none and the experience is unparalleled.

Trade campaigns

With so many customers wanting to experience unique and immersive holidays, we recognised the importance of keeping the trade educated and up to date on our fleet, destinations and collaborations, and therefore launched our new quarterly initiative ‘Spotlight On...’. Between April and June, we shone our inaugural spotlight on St Maarten, an island that has played host to us in the winter sailing season for 30 years this year.

For the first time ever, we were joined by St Maarten Tourist Board representatives, who flew over to join us on a week-long roadshow of trade events offering afternoon teas, three-course

meals, lunches, presentations, fam trip places, hotel stays, holidays and so much more to more than 250 agents and tour operators.

Return to Costa Rica

In December 2022, *Star Clipper* returns to Costa Rica after a 10-year hiatus, a move that has been met with exceptional demand and excitement by our trade partners. Costa Rica's eco-friendly values and practices align perfectly with our morals and ethos. As a cruise line, we are taking active measures to reduce waste, source locally and recycle all we possibly can.

Up to 98 per cent of Costa Rica's energy is renewable and forest cover now stands at 53 per cent after painstaking efforts to reverse the effects of decades of deforestation. *Star Clipper* will operate seven-night roundtrip itineraries out of Puntarenas, also incorporating Nicaragua and Panama from December 2022 to March 2023.

Our trade sales team are on hand to give any training or attend events and functions hosted by our agent friends – as a team we have clocked up over 70 Star Clippers sailings between us, so we are well equipped to answer any queries. 📞



FAY MCCORMACK
UK GENERAL MANAGER
STAR CLIPPERS



A focus on relaxed luxury attracts guests happy to venture off the beaten track



UNPLUG FROM THE ORDINARY

Santorini, Greece

DIVE INTO THE WORLD AROUND YOU, IN A DEEPER, MORE MEANINGFUL WAY.

To change the way you look at the world, you have to change the way you see it. Azamara® invites guests to immerse themselves into a world of destinations at a more relaxed pace, giving them time to fully appreciate the landscapes, culture and people. To slow down and fully savour the travel experience, by day and by night.

We allow guests to tour the coasts of Spain, marvel at the whitewashed walls and blinding blue skies of Greece, and discover many other exotic locales at their own speed with our Country IntensiveSM Voyages, each with its own carefully curated opportunities. Reserve a journey with us that showcases the difference between travelled and well-travelled. Let us show you the world, and *change the way you sea*.



Change The Way You Sea

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT:
[CLUBAZAMARA.CO.UK](https://clubazamara.co.uk) AND [AZAMARA.CO.UK](https://azamara.co.uk)

©2022 Azamara. Ships registered in Malta. 'Change The Way You Sea' is an international service mark of SP Cruises OpCo Limited.

Time to catch up

Book a second 2022 holiday with Riviera Travel and save 20% if your second holiday is an 8+ day cruise*



8 DAYS FROM
£1,779pp*

Amsterdam, Cologne & the Best of Holland & Flanders

Amsterdam • Rotterdam • Cologne
Kinderdijk • Bruges • Ghent
Antwerp • Arnhem

April to October 2022



8 DAYS FROM
£1,569pp*

The Seine, Paris & Normandy

Paris • Les Andelys • Rouen
Bayeux • Arromanches • Honfleur
Giverny • Vernon

April to October 2022



8 DAYS FROM
£1,569pp*

Burgundy, the River Rhône & Provence

Lyon • Beaune • Burgundy
Vienne • Ardèche Gorges • Arles
Pont du Gard • Avignon

April to October 2022 & 2023

To find out more, request a brochure or to book

Call: **01283 245391** Visit: **wcruiseriviera.co.uk**

*The offer period is between 1 April - 31 May 2022. Offer applies either to two new holiday bookings made in the offer period, or to a second 2022 holiday booked in the offer period if an existing 2022 holiday booking had been made before 1 April 2022. Both holidays must depart in 2022 in order to be valid for the offer. Discount will apply to the second holiday booked by booking date, and applies to the basic holiday package; flight or hotel upgrades or optional extras are not included. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Valid for new bookings only, and cannot be applied retrospectively. Not applicable for holidays which have been cancelled prior to travel. 20% saving applies when the second holiday booked is a cruise of 8 days or more, departing in 2022. Saving to be applied to the final balance payment. Normal deposit values apply.

