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cruise

TRADE NEWS

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Sky Princess
Viking Akun

WIN
Top-of-the-range
tech & gadgets



Centre stage

How Crystal Cruises is upping
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(C) = Overnight stay

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LETTER

Welcome to the November issue



One of the best aspects of being the editor of a cruise magazine has to be the opportunity to experience brand new ships; I had the good fortune recently of having the opportunity to get on board the lovely *Sky Princess* for its shakedown sailing from Trieste to Athens.

You can read my blog online (just search for *Sky Princess* at cruisetradenews.com), and on page nine of this issue of the magazine you'll find an interview with the line's vice-president for the UK & Europe, Tony Roberts. He talks about the importance of education in the context of hosting agents to enable them to have a first-hand impression of the ship's amenities, overall feel and approach to service.

Other interviews in our November issue include deputy editor Gary Peters' conversation with MSC's director of sales for the UK & Ireland, Steve Williams, who discusses the line's ambitious expansion plans (*pages 22-23*).

The spotlight also falls on Celebrity Cruises, with Claire Stirrup taking us through the role technology plays in helping to add the wow factor to guests' time aboard the ships in its fleet (*page 21*).

Elsewhere, we look at the rapidly growing phenomenon that is multi-generational holidays: our regular Win at Selling column (*page 15*) explores the ways that agents can capitalise on this by promoting the flexible nature of such trips, which can offer tailored activities for each different age group.

Our river cruising feature (*pages 36-38*) picks up this theme and highlights the growing number of family-friendly sailings designed to float everyone's boat, so to speak. From exploring fairy tale castles on the Rhine to taking a spooky Venetian ghost walk, or meeting French cowboys in the Camargue, children, parents and older relatives can all have fun together thanks to a fascinating range of authentic on-ship and on-shore adventures.

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



Colette Doyle
Editor
@cruisetradenews

INDUSTRY



Younger generations back cruise and travel agents

The number of young holidaymakers who have been on a cruise has grown more than any other age group in the past 12 months, according to ABTA's latest Holiday Habits report.

A total of 28 per cent of 18-34 year olds have taken a cruise, up six per cent on last year. By comparison, the number of those aged over 65 who have been on a cruise – 38 per cent – is up by two per cent. Part of the increase can be attributed to the range of itineraries on offer, according to ABTA, as a fifth of 18-34 year olds are keen to try a wellness or a foodie cruise.

In addition, more than a quarter of 25-34 year olds are interested in expedition-style cruises and adventurous experiences. Shorter trips are also more popular with younger travellers.

The report also shows that millennials and those in generation Z are increasingly using travel agents to book their holidays – 18-24 year olds are the most likely age group to book a holiday in store, with nearly a quarter – 22 per cent – doing so in the past 12 months, compared with a UK average of 12 per cent.

More than a third of 18-24 year olds booked through a travel professional, in part attributed

to the fact they value the experience and knowledge of an agent.

In addition, 16 per cent of people who book a holiday online now seek additional support during the process, such as using a live online chat service, or speaking with a travel professional via social media. This rises to almost a third (30 per cent) of 25-34 year olds, followed by 28 per cent of 18-24 year olds.

ABTA director of brand and business development Victoria Bacon said: "It's exciting to see the generation of digital natives increasingly realising the benefits of using the experience and expertise of travel professionals and booking their holidays with

them, whether that's online or in store.

"For every generation, travel professionals have a huge amount of experience, expertise and support to offer and they can really help take the hassle out of booking.

"Increasingly, ABTA member travel companies are responding to the changing needs of customers by providing support through web chat and social media, so whether they're booking online, over the phone or in store, they get the support of a travel professional."

"It's exciting to see digital natives seeing the benefits of our expertise"

In B R I E F

Top reads

● Connect with CTN on social media and our website, cruisetradenews.com, for even more cruise content. The hottest stories this month include our interview with Aurora Expeditions MD Robert Halfpenny, discussing the line's new ship, *Greg Mortimer*, and a visit to Naples to witness the steel cutting for Cunard's fourth ship, launching 2022.

And the winner is...

● We're happy to announce that this month's winner of the CTN newsletter draw and £25 Amazon voucher is Olivia Powling of ROL Cruise. The CTN newsletter is the one-stop shop featuring the latest in cruise news, features, destination guides, interviews and more.

New HAL ship

● Holland America Line is a step closer to welcoming its next Pinnacle-class ship after launching the forward lower section of *Ryndam* at Fincantieri's Palermo shipyard. HAL president Orlando Ashford said the line "will soon announce the inaugural itineraries" for the 2,668-guest ship, which is due to launch in May 2021.

Multigen holidays up

● Up to 64 per cent of families are taking multigenerational holidays or are considering one, say figures unveiled at the 2019 Mature Marketing Association summit. More and more over-50s use digital devices and social media for holiday inspiration, so agents need to use inspirational but simple online messages.

INDUSTRY



Star Breeze is being lengthened in Italy with a new mid-section

Windstar refurbis to enhance fleet

Windstar Cruises has completed the final cut to the hull of *Star Breeze*, as it prepares to stretch the ship and insert a new 84-foot mid-section.

Star Breeze is the first of three of the line's ships, alongside *Star Legend* and *Star Pride*, to go through the transformation project, valued at around £200m.

The additional space will be used for new suites, an upgraded pool and whirlpool on the upper deck, a re-imagined spa and fitness centre, retail shops and more.

The project also involves removing and replacing the engines for a more environmentally friendly operation. The

transformation on *Star Breeze* will finish in February 2020, when the ship sails from Barcelona to Lisbon.

Star Legend, the second ship to undergo the transformation, will debut in Barcelona on 2 July 2020. The final ship, *Star Pride*, will relaunch in November 2020.

Windstar Cruises president John Delaney said: "The initiative is the most complex and comprehensive small-ship lengthening, engine replacement, and renovation project undertaken in cruising and we are very proud to be working with Fincantieri, the leader in major cruise ship renovations."

REAL RESPONSE MEDIA EVENTS



The Wave Awards bring the whole industry together

Cruise Stars and Wave Awards: Book your places

It's awards season and the next couple of months see the acclaimed Cruise Stars Awards and Wave Awards take place.

Organised by Real Response Media, the Cruise Stars Awards recognise top talent in the industry and the work that goes into growing the cruise audience.

The ceremony is on 22 November at the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms, London. Visit cruisestarsawards.com for details.

As for the 2020 Wave Awards, the Oscars of Cruising have a new home at 8 Northumberland Avenue, central London. The awards – launched in 2015 – celebrate the very best of the UK's cruise industry across a number of categories. Visit thewaveawards.com for more.

APPOINTMENTS



Former Thomas Cook bosses **Chris Mottershead**, Kathryn Darbandi and Nicki Tempest-Mitchell have joined Barrhead Travel parent firm Travel Leaders Group. Barrhead Travel plans to open up to 100 Barrhead-branded stores in the UK and hire a number of Thomas Cook ex-employees.



Naturalists **Boris Wise** and **Eva Molin Westerholm** have joined Crystal Expedition Cruises as expedition leader and assistant expedition leader for *Crystal Endeavor*. Wise is a photographer with a background in horticulture. Westerholm is an expedition specialist and anthropologist.



Former Hurtigruten explorer manager **Danny Giles** is to be Silversea's new UK and Ireland expedition sales manager. He will work with the trade to drive business through the UK and Irish markets. Giles replaces Akvile Marozaitė after her promotion to expedition operations manager.

moments to reflect



It seems that the Danube is the river everyone wants to cruise – it took the number 1 spot when we asked Titan travellers to name the river at the top of their wishlist. It's no surprise it's a popular pick, with itineraries offering stops at elegant capital cities (Vienna and Budapest are often highlights), ruined castles and wine-making towns.

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titan
travel

perfect moments shared

INTERVIEW

Education is key to positioning cruise as a valid holiday choice

Education is of prime importance in assisting the trade to sell more cruise, according to vice-president of Princess Cruises for the UK & Europe Tony Roberts. Speaking to CTN editor Colette Doyle during the preview sailing of *Sky Princess* from Trieste to Athens, Roberts noted that some 300 agents were invited to join the shakedown cruise, making it “our most extensive ship visit programme in the UK”.

He continued: “It’s hugely important for them to experience it first hand, so they have the confidence to speak to customers about the experience and why to pick Princess.” The fam trip will be supported by an online training



Sky Suites on *Sky Princess* can accommodate up to five guests

programme and a field sales team who will “spread the word and make sure agents understand the brand and can communicate that [to potential clients]”.

Agents selling cruise shouldn’t think of it as a separate sector, but rather as an alternative holiday choice, added Roberts, elaborating on the reasons behind cruise’s growing popularity in the UK. “Guests get to visit so many destinations, plus there’s an incredible choice of entertainment, bars and dining to rival any resort in the world”.

He also referred to the cruise sector’s “fantastic personalised service”, adding

that he had “never been anywhere I felt as welcome as on a cruise ship”. He highlighted the need for agents to “explain that it’s an amazing holiday experience... there is a whole section [of the population] who may not consider taking a cruise simply because they don’t know what is involved”.

He observed that it was essential to “get the right people on the right ship” and, in line with Welcoming Experience, one of the five pillars of the company’s Princess Difference concept unveiled earlier this year, friendly and attentive crew aim to make guests feel ‘hosted’. “The warm welcome from our crew should make guests feel like they’re coming home,” elaborated Roberts.

Talking about the use of Princess’ wearable Ocean Medallion device, which allows guests to use a range of interactive, on-demand services, [*Sky Princess* is the line’s first Ocean Medallion-enabled new-build], Roberts said it was “hugely exciting to be at the forefront of this kind of technology”. Acknowledging that other lines have introduced similar devices, he said he believed that what differentiates Princess’ offer is “the sheer scope of it – it’s woven into everything... it’s an entire eco-system [representing] personalisation through the use of technology”.

Roberts also declared himself “pleased and excited” with the Sky Suites, the two suites at the top of the new ship that feature the biggest balconies at sea, measuring more than 1,000 square feet and with each suite accommodating up to five guests. “One of the things we wanted to do was provide an outside area to allow guests to connect with the ocean and the destinations visited. It’s a great space for entertaining and spending quality time with family and friends.”

Looking ahead to the future of cruise, Roberts agreed that the current market is tough, but said he felt Brexit was merely “a bump in the road, it’s a blip... people will continue to go on holiday and



“Brexit is merely a bump in the road, a blip – people will continue to go on holiday”

the market will continue to grow. There will always be geo-political issues and weather problems like hurricanes, but [despite these factors] it will keep on growing in the future.”

He concluded by highlighting the \$61 billion investment planned for cruise ships globally, describing it as evidence of “the huge confidence in the market’s ability to grow. There will be something like 30 million cruise passengers internationally by 2020, but this is small compared with land-based destinations like Las Vegas for instance, which has 43 million visitors annually. When you consider this, you can see the potential for growth is there.” ↴



The Ocean Medallion is “an entire eco-system”



MARKETING GURU

In this new series of articles, **Mark Lewsey**, head of marketing at Accord Marketing, talks us through a number of hot topics pertinent to the cruise industry. Here, he looks at how to ensure that cruise websites deliver

With cruise capacity growing rapidly and the market becoming more saturated, agents need to think about how to drive new interest and extract even more value from their existing customer base.

In an era of 'infobesity', where the average global attention span falls constantly, if you don't serve consumers' needs immediately – especially online – they will just move on to a brand that does. And with a high-value purchase like cruise, the pressure to make a strong first impression is crucial.

So how to ensure your website delivers? Key to this are an informative blog page, easy-to-use navigation and high-quality onsite features to keep visitors digitally engaged. It's a balance between being eye-catching, memorable, and easy to use.

Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) is making minor tweaks to a website to make the journey from research to booking as smooth as possible.

By recording users interacting with your website, you can assess website components, such as layout, imagery and content length, and review the pages where customers usually enter and exit the site. After pinpointing key areas of user frustration, you can test alternate page designs to make the website much easier to navigate.

To be effective, this process should be cyclical and ongoing. Consumer attitudes shift and adapt, so by regularly running tests and refining your site, you can be sure your brand delivers a great user experience every time.

ITINERARIES



Iceland is on the upcoming Silversea programmes

Sales open for Silversea

General sales are now open on Silversea's summer 2021 & winter 2021/2022 itineraries.

The programmes include 197 new itineraries, sailing between January 2021 and April 2022 and calling at 528 destinations in 92 countries, with 28 maiden calls.

Highlights include a full eastern Mediterranean programme, two solar eclipse voyages in Antarctica and 30 sailings in Northern Europe, including more in Iceland.

Silversea's chief marketing officer, Barbara Muckermann, said: "Now on sale to both first-time guests and returning

members of our Venetian Society, our new summer 2021 and winter 2021/2022 voyages have been designed to satiate travellers' curiosity, to unlock immersive experiences from pole to pole and to take guests closer to the authentic beauty of the world.

"The variety of experiences on offer is simply unparalleled and unprecedented within the industry. From the new Holy Land voyage to an enhanced overnight call in Monaco for the Monte Carlo Grand Prix, the highlights of our cruise line's new 2021/2022 collection will appeal to all discerning travellers." Go to **silversea.com** for more information.

SHIPS

Cunard to expand trade message



President Simon Palethorpe is convinced agents should have the Cunard experience

Communication with the trade is front of mind at Cunard, according to the line's president, and it could launch more ships in the future.

Speaking to *Cruise Trade News* at the steel-cutting ceremony for its fourth ship, Simon Palethorpe outlined how the brand intends to strengthen trade partnerships as it prepares to welcome the ship in 2022.

"We had 500 agents on *Queen Mary 2* earlier this year and I had lunch with a handful," said Palethorpe. "A significant proportion said to me, 'I had no idea it was so good, it's amazing'."

"On one level that made me feel great, but on the other I thought, 'hang on, we must make sure you know how great it is.' We're having conversations about how we get more agents to feel it, see it, touch it."



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For the past 27 years Aurora Expeditions has led small-group, expedition-style travel to the polar regions and other wild and remote destinations. Their aim is to connect like-minded travellers with nature and wildlife, and offer unique experiences and activities in some of the world's most inspiring regions. This includes intrepid areas such as Antarctica, the Arctic, Costa Rica, Scotland, Patagonia and more.

Set to sail in 2019, Aurora Expeditions new state-of-the-art purpose-built expedition vessel, the *Greg Mortimer*, is the first passenger vessel to feature the patented Ulstein X-Bow®, allowing for faster and smoother sailings – a ship designed by expeditioners, for expeditioners.

The *Greg Mortimer* has also been built to the strictest environmental standards of the latest Polar Code, to ensure non-intrusive and low-impact voyages.

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*Terms & Conditions apply. Discounts available on new bookings only aboard the *Greg Mortimer* and must be booked before 31 December 2019. Normal booking terms and conditions apply. To confirm your voyage booking, a completed booking form and non-refundable deposit of \$2,500 pp in the booking currency is required within 7 days of re-served berth/s. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Zodiac (boat) featured was at a safe distance from glacier. For full terms and conditions visit auroraexpeditions.co.uk

Diversity

We look at the latest initiatives when it comes to inclusivity in the cruise sector

Celebrity Cruises recently teamed up with *Gay Times* to launch an online series exploring LGBTQ+ travel experiences.

Called Trailblazers, the project ran in early October and featured mini-episodes sailing to key LGBTQ+ European destinations including Barcelona, Valencia, Ibiza, Nice and Rome.

Celebrity Cruises UK & Ireland MD Jo Rzymowska said: "We were thrilled to welcome the cast of Trailblazers on *Celebrity Edge*, which we hope has positively shaped their perception of travelling as members of the LGBTQ+ community. We want everyone on board our ships to feel appreciated and welcome."

Celebrity Cruises will host its fourth annual Pride Party at Sea next June, with each ship in the fleet hosting a range of events and activities.



Celebrity Edge is helping fly the flag for LGBTQ+ cruisers

Celebrity hosts Trailblazers concept



Cruise specialist unveils LGBTQ+ pledge

A home-based travel agent has issued a pledge to LGBTQ+ clients to ensure they feel "welcome and accepted without any judgment".

Jon Fletcher of Cruise Holidays UK has launched a four-point plan designed to improve inclusivity and the cruise experiences on offer.

The pledge is:

- We believe that our business should be both inclusive and welcoming to all members of the LGBTQ+ community
- All our guests are treated in a warm, welcoming, non-judgmental way
- We believe it is important to work with our travel partners to create inclusive holiday experiences and develop and encourage best practice
- We believe it is important to support the LGBTQ+ community throughout the year

HAL boss promotes inclusion

After spontaneously jumping on a plane from Seattle to London, Holland America Line president Orlando Ashford made an appearance at Carnival House, Southampton, as part of National Inclusion Week.

Delivering a keynote speech in front of cruise line employees, local business owners and a host of media, the first African-American

president of a cruise line gave his thoughts on inclusion, discussing the importance of having people from all walks of life in the workplace.

Having spent his life leading human resources teams, the Seattleite had a thing or two to share about creating a warm, friendly company culture, sharing tips on how to network and generally include all members of staff.



Orlando Ashford brought the "warm and friendly" message to the UK

Winning streak

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



Emma Short

Senior Cruise Specialist
CRUISE 1ST

How did you feel about winning the regional agent sales star (Midlands and East of England) award?

Overwhelmed and very proud. The moment I received the award made all the hard work worthwhile. It was an honour to win it and that was a very proud moment for me.

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

A lot of credit must go to Cruise 1st for the help and support in building their bespoke packages. I also must thank my manager, Andrew McDonough, for believing in me and pushing me. I believe in being part of a team that motivates you to be your best.

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

I always advise people to become great listeners, go on the journey with the customer and talk them through the whole holiday to create that excitement. People should also think outside the box and go that extra mile.

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

I would say being able to have full control of a recent passenger group. I created the presentation and was asked to attend a regional meeting to advertise the cruise.

I worked very closely with MSC Cruises to secure a special bespoke group offer and the fantastic relationship we have with MSC helped us to book more than 500 passengers on one sailing. In addition, I will be joining the sailing to escort the group. It's the start of a great business opportunity.

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

Social media is becoming more and more popular so I would like to see more complimentary use of technology, including the use of wi-fi, to encourage customers to share their live experiences. As travel agents we are encouraged to share what's happening on social media to help customers understand what to expect.

What's your dream destination for a cruise?

It's a tough one, but I would say Australia. I've always wanted to visit that side of the world and understand the different culture.

What on-board amenity do you enjoy the most?

I am a massive foodie, so a great culinary experience is a must. Service is very important to me, as we know



When she gets the chance, Emma will head for Australia.

cruises can be very expensive so receiving a high level of service goes a long way. The use of tea and coffee facilities in a cabin is also a welcome perk.

How do you see your career in the industry progressing?

I am lucky enough to have the full support of Cruise 1st in creating my own brand called Solo Cruise Club, offering bespoke Cruise 1st packages to solo travellers. I believe this is a missed opportunity so far in the cruise market and with the help and support of my team I am hoping this will go from strength to strength. ⚓

"I believe in being part of a team that motivates you to be your best"

Win at selling

Multi-generational cruises

Everyone appreciates the importance of family time together and a holiday is the perfect way to bond and relax. Here, managing director for the UK & Ireland at A-Rosa, Lucia Rowe, explains why multi-gen is a market that agents simply can't ignore

At a conference I attended recently, we learned that the global family travel market is set to grow to 376 million family trips by 2022. Research by Expedia showed that, when looking at the top 10 fastest-growing travel types around the world, family friendly came out on top, up by a massive 204 per cent year on year.

So the opportunity for agents is real, and it is huge. This is where the cruise sector comes into its own, as it offers a diverse range of products, both ocean and river.

At A-Rosa, we've been actively targeting the multi-generational market for some years. River cruises offer the chance to travel to key cities around Europe and enjoy other delights of the region – all combined with relaxing on board among your loved ones.

It's fair to say that some agents may not immediately think of a



“Some agents may not immediately think of a river cruise as a family option”

river cruise when suggesting family and multi-generational options to clients, but it is actually a great solution that can meet the needs of everyone.

On our ships we offer flexible meal times and no set seating, so families can simply show up and eat when the restaurant is open. There are expansive buffets, plus kids' menus, as well as pools for kids to splash in while the ships are sailing to the next destination.

On key school holiday dates on-board kids' clubs are offered free of charge for four to 15-year-olds. So confident were we in this market that we took the bold step of offering a 'Kids Cruise Free' promotion on all our sailings (excluding the Douro, where we have a much smaller ship).

Looking ahead, things are set to get very exciting in this market, as cruise lines develop their products to capitalise on this growing sector.

TOP TIPS

Highlight to customers the benefits of seeing so many different destinations in one trip and only having to unpack once for the entire family

Promote flexibility: consider what the different generations can do – different excursions, for example, on-board activities and food choices

Talk about the value for money and highlight what is included for all the family to enjoy

For 2020 A-Rosa will introduce a range of new family excursions, plus in 2021 a new ship on the Rhine – one designed specially for the multi-generational market.

It will have a range of incredible new features including a family area with spacious 28-square-metre cabins sleeping up to five people, and a dedicated kids' club space. The ship will also feature a separate children's pool, located next to a large swimming pool on the sun deck, and the restaurant will have a children's area where young guests can eat together with their friends if they prefer.

Agents should bear in mind that the children cruising today are the cruisers of the future; if they have a great time cruising with their parents and grandparents, they will become cruisers for life. ⚓



Children cruising today are the adult cruisers of the future

Guests will be treated to world-class shows



Entertainment extravaganza

How the Crystal on Broadway itineraries and dining options will lift Crystal Cruises' offering to new heights

As itineraries evolve to meet growing demand for immersive and meaningful experiences, so too are cruise lines' on-board entertainment and dining offerings. Lines are regularly unveiling new shows, collaborations and themed itineraries to suit all tastes, and at Crystal Cruises this is manifesting itself in a series of Crystal on Broadway voyages and a special expedition sailing on *Crystal Endeavor* featuring Master Chef Nobu Matsuhisa, the culinary star behind Crystal's Umi Uma & Sushi Bar.

World-class talent

As for the Broadway itineraries, the line has revealed 20 sailings – split evenly on *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity* – that will feature Broadway stars, choreographers, directors,

costume designers and other talented artists and professionals from Broadway.

The voyages, which form part of Crystal's partnership with multi-Tony Award-winning producer Kevin McCollum, will provide the “world-class entertainment of Broadway no matter where in the world they [guests] are”, according to Crystal's vice-president of entertainment, Keith Cox.

“The calibre of talent and star power featured on Crystal on Broadway voyages is truly impressive,” added Cox. “The performers and insiders that grace our stages for these programmes are true experts in their field, with stories and perspectives that are as entertaining as their performances and presentations.”

While guests can be sure of witnessing first-class stage productions and solo acts, Crystal Cruises is also promising a series of Q&A sessions and presentations from Broadway stars,

Crystal on Broadway, The Show, featuring songs from the hit musicals *Rent*, *Something Rotten!* and *West Side Story*, debuted on *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity* following recent refurbishments.

Nobu on Endeavor

The natural bedfellow to great entertainment is, of course, wonderful cuisine. As an ultra-luxury line, Crystal Cruises elevates its dining experiences even further in 2020, evidenced by its Indonesian Immersive & Great Barrier Reef sailing on its new expedition ship, *Crystal Endeavor*.

The 16-night cruise, which departs 15 October 2020, will welcome aboard chef Nobu Matsuhisa, who will devise a series of dishes for guests as they visit the southern islands of Australia, the Great Barrier Reef and Indonesia's tropics.

"We are delighted to welcome Chef Nobu back as he sails for the first time aboard *Crystal Endeavor*," said Crystal's senior vice-president of hotel operations Toni Neumeister. "A highlight of every Crystal ocean voyage, and now expedition voyages, is the phenomenal cuisine served in Umi Uma on board and it's an even greater pleasure to have the master himself join our guests for these special occasions.



Chef Nobu will join guests on *Crystal Endeavor*

"Not only famous for his innovative approach to classic dishes, Nobu is known for his warm and engaging character, which makes every guest feel at home even as they learn and dine alongside a master."

On the menu for guests will be three limited-availability *omakase*, or chef's choice, dinners, and two hosted in Umi Uma for 30 guests each will feature a menu of Nobu's specialties selected and prepared by him and his chefs. In addition, just nine guests will get to experience the



Nobu's black cod dish is a firm favourite

Omakase Sushi Bar & Ultimate Vintage Connoisseur wine dinner in Crystal Endeavor's Vintage Room, hosted by Nobu, sake Master Hazu and Crystal's head sommelier.

Nobu will also host a cooking demo and a cookbook signing and photo session during the cruise, while Master Hazu rounds off the food and drink demonstrations with a sake tasting. Guests can also learn a unique style of floral design that incorporates western and Japanese design concepts with flora artist Nicolai Bergmann, in what is a packed programme of activities.

Agents should visit crystalcruises.co.uk for more information.

Select Crystal on Broadway itineraries:

Crystal Symphony – Tsars & Scandinavian Splendour, Stockholm to Dover, departing 14 July 2020

•
Crystal Symphony – Masterpieces of the Mediterranean, Barcelona to Venice, departing 1 September 2020

•
Crystal Serenity – North American Treasures, Québec City to New York City, departing 28 September 2020

•
Crystal Serenity – Tropical Serenade, round-trip Miami, departing 2 December 2020

•
Crystal Serenity – Caribbean Kaleidoscope, San Juan to Miami, departing 16 December 2020



From Broadway to the high seas

Sales INSPIRATION

Cruise for less with Amadeus

Offer

Amadeus River Cruises has announced a new 2020 itinerary taking in some of Germany's most idyllic landscapes.

The nine-day German Riverscapes sailing on *Amadeus Brilliant* will travel from Passau to Trier, visiting Regensburg, Nuremberg and Koblenz, as well as Würzburg, Ochsenfurt and Oberwesel.

Visits include a walking tour of Regensburg, a visit to the Thurn and Taxis Castle and brewery, plus wine tasting.

Prices start at £1,199pp, including return flights, with 15 per cent off the price if booked before 30 November 2019.

Some of Germany's most picturesque areas feature on the new Amadeus itinerary

Incentive

Christmas shopping bonus

Avalon Waterways and Cosmos are giving agents a chance to win £50 Love to Shop vouchers in the run-up to the festive season.

Agents can claim the voucher on every Cosmos escorted tour or Avalon Waterways river cruise booking until 30 November 2019, on all departures, with no limit to the number of entries per agent.

To claim the vouchers, agents need to email agencysales@cosmos.co.uk with their name, agency and booking reference. All bookings must be logged by 30 November, with vouchers sent out in early December.

Triple festive offers

Star Clippers is giving guests the chance to spend Christmas and New Year in the Caribbean or Southeast Asia, across three itineraries with a 10 per cent saving on bookings made by 31 January 2020.

The cruises – Windward and Grenadine Islands; Treasure & Leeward Islands; and Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore – depart on 19 December 2020

Guests can also choose one of three limited-time offers – £540 on-board credit for two, no single supplement, or a third person sharing for free.

Offer

Clients will be delighted by Christmas aboard the elegant *Royal Clipper*

Incentive

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

Incentive

Scarlet Lady, Virgin's first ship, has enticements all round

Save on Virgin's Circles programme

Virgin Voyages has a special promotion for its Circles programme, a concept designed to bring together and reward passengers who travel in groups and their travel advisors.

The line is currently offering a special promotion for new 2020 Circles bookings until 31 December 2019.

A circle for Virgin Voyages is defined as 10 cabins or more, including solo cabins, and can be as large as 150 passengers.

Circles on all voyage dates will be

eligible for what is known as the Circle Bounty, which includes on-board credit known as Sailor Loot. This can be spent during the voyage.

Travel agents, or first mates, as Virgin Voyages calls them, will also receive a five per cent bonus commission on the voyage fare for new 2020 Circles. The offer is valid on all 2020 sailings except *Scarlet Lady*'s maiden voyage on 1 April and Sir Richard Branson's Birthday Bash on 15 July 2020.

Gadgets galore

There is still time for agents to get their hands on top of the range gadgets, courtesy of Lotus Cruises.

Agents can win iPhones, iPads, MacBooks and iMacs, as part of the operator's ongoing programme of incentives.

Agents and tour operators can collect Lotus Coins every time they book a cabin on one of the line's seven-night sailings, from 2019 to 2021. Coins can then be used to redeem an Apple product.

To redeem their reward, agents need to keep a record of the reference number for each booking they make, and complete an online incentive form.

The programme runs until 15 March 2020. Visit lotuscruises.com/incentive for more details.

Offer

Roald Amundsen will be off to Antarctica

Explore with Hurtigruten

Guests can save up to 25 per cent per person on a range of itineraries with expedition line Hurtigruten.

The offer, which applies to new bookings made before 15 December 2019, is valid on 12 or 18-day voyages on selected dates during winter 2020/21.

The cruises include the 12-day Highlights of the Frozen Continent itinerary, sailing the

Drake Passage and visiting Antarctica, as well as the 18-day Antarctica, Chilean Fjords & Falklands cruise, sailing on *Roald Amundsen*, Hurtigruten's first-of-its-kind hybrid-powered ship, which uses battery technology to reduce emissions. Its sister ships – *MS Fridtjof Nansen* and the unnamed third – arrive in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Visit hurtigruten.co.uk

In my VIEW

Travel Counsellors' head of cruise, **Janet Whittingham**, gives her take on how the industry can come together to support clients and fellow workers in difficult times



“The industry needs these amazing people and we all have a duty of care to offer them hope”

With the industry still feeling the shock of the demise of Thomas Cook and the uncertainty for many of its employees and customers, my heart truly goes out to all. To lose such an established business, which helped put package holidays and cruises on the map, is incredibly sad.

I was privileged to be involved with our well-trained crisis team when the news struck, as we eagerly assisted our Travel Counsellors in securing new flights, holidays and cruises for our customers.

My thoughts turned to our cruise clients and the effect on the Thomas Cook flights connected to our tailor-made packages and any third-party operator bookings. I wrote at once to our cruise partners to ask if we could all reflect on this unusual situation and come together, as often the cruise community does, to look after customers in the best way possible.

At the time of writing it's great to hear that cruise lines are offering the option for forward bookings to be moved to new ownership, continuing to provide the holidays clients were so looking forward to. Some of the Thomas Cook stores seem set to continue to trade, too.

Travel Counsellors also joined many in the industry in supporting Thomas Cook employees. We have welcomed Thomas Cook employees to our headquarters in Manchester, providing a place to come together, pause, reflect and plan for the future, including staging Care events across the country featuring careers advice, CV writing and wellbeing support.

With 35 years in the travel and cruise business, I too have reflected personally on my career over the years – how I had been made redundant once and was able to believe in myself again through the support of the wonderful people in the cruise sector and beyond.

Come together

I strongly believe that Thomas Cook staff – with a wealth of cruise knowledge – must be championed to continue to work in an industry they love. We all have a role to play to make sure we find new avenues for them to stay close to our mutual customers and continue to offer the best holiday experiences. It was again so reassuring to see many of the cruise clubs reaching out to offer future opportunities for those with uncertain futures.

The industry needs these amazing people to stay and we all have a duty of care to offer them an olive branch of hope.

I have had the pleasure to showcase what we can offer to Thomas Cook cruise experts and how they can continue to look after their regular cruise clients by launching their own business, sharing the large portfolio of cruise partners we work closely with.

It has been heart-warming to hear of so many of the Thomas Cook employees finding themselves again, whether that's through Travel Counsellors or different cruise specialists – and we must all continue our mission to keep them on board (if you'll pardon the pun).

Our duty of care is to future-proof our industry and to continue to fly the flag for cruising holidays – a mission that I truly take to heart. ⚓



The closure of Thomas Cook means a rethink for the industry as well as for customers

Spotlight on...

Technology

Celebrity Cruises UK & Ireland sales director
Claire Stirrup explains how the cruise line is using
technology to improve the guest experience

What role does technology play on *Celebrity Edge*?

As you'd expect with a near-\$1bn ship, it's packed with technology. Innovation comes in many different forms, but for Celebrity Cruises, everything we do fits with our modern luxury ethos – whether it is the smart features that guests can enjoy, or technology that makes the new ship function in the very best way.

Today's cruisers expect their ship to be as clean and efficient as possible and *Celebrity Edge* has more than 40 different features to help reduce fuel consumption. The Parabolic UltraBow helps the ship cut through the water more efficiently and gives a smoother ride, and an air lubrication system creates tiny bubbles to reduce drag. As a result, the ship is 20 per cent more efficient than any other ship in the fleet.

In terms of the technology that our guests engage with, it has to be the Magic Carpet – a cantilevered, floating platform that moves up and down the side of the ship. Also, the in-room technology allows guests to adjust nearly every feature in the room at the touch of a button, including lighting and air-conditioning.

How have guests reacted to the technology?

Interest in *Celebrity Edge* sailings is incredibly strong, and UK cruisers are booking in significant numbers. It's the first season, but our trade partners are reporting great feedback and anecdotal evidence from social media is fantastic.

To coincide with *Celebrity Edge*'s arrival in the UK in May you launched an augmented reality app – can you tell us more?

Since the ship is so advanced, it seems only right that it has its own app. This gives guests a full tour of all of the ship's features, through a mix of audio, soundscaping and 3D augmented reality. They get the lowdown on all the cool bits



– it takes in the Grand Plaza, Magic Carpet and so on – and allows a 360-degree peek at the galley, the bridge, the engine control room and the luxurious new *Celebrity Edge* launches.

How is technology changing cruising?

One of the most immediate changes that guests on *Celebrity Edge* will notice is the new check-in. We're using the latest in facial recognition technology so guests no longer have to queue when they join the ship. They upload a selfie via the Celebrity Cruises' mobile app and will be automatically checked in when they step on board. It can cut the time from transfer coach to Martini Bar to just 10 minutes.

How big a part does technology play in determining people's choice of cruise?

Technology should tick the boxes of what's important to guests – it has to make their holiday easier, better and more memorable. People aren't attracted to technology itself, but to what it does to improve the overall experience.

How does it help agents in selling cruise?

It is all about that sense of 'wow'. Competition is ramping up in the sector and many lines are launching new ships. Technology is intertwined with the innovation that drives the market forward. Everyone wants to be responsible for the next big thing and this creates the buzz that helps agents secure sales.

How will Celebrity Cruises use technology on future ships?

We will definitely be scaling up the facial recognition technology to more ships and terminals, aiming to install it at all major embarkation ports over the next year or so. We also have the Celebrity Revolution programme to update the existing fleet to include many *Celebrity Edge* experiences. Beyond that, watch this space... we never sit still for very long. ⚓



Celebrity Edge displays an amazing array of technology

MSC Cruises

Steve Williams is a man on a mission. He talks to **Gary Peters** about MSC Cruises' fighting spirit and hugely ambitious expansion plans

Steve Williams and MSC Cruises are not short of get-up-and-go. It's an ambition fuelled by a remarkable growth plan – when Williams joined the cruise line three years ago as director of sales UK & Ireland, “we had 17 new-builds, of which five are now delivered. We have another 12 to come – it's absolutely insane but incredibly exciting.”

When distilled into numbers it's even more eye watering. “We are now working with about 3,000 more partners than we were three years ago and we are always looking to build on that,” Williams says over lunch. “What's massively helped us is that wider distribution pool. We need to continue the path of growth, as we're going from 2.5 million passengers globally to almost six million by 2026.

“We are a team of fighters and we enjoy the challenge. When I joined we had a team of five and now we are a team of 18 and I'm recruiting two more. It's very structured, with a head of retail, regional sales



“We've made no bones about the fact that we would like to be the largest international cruise line operating within the UK”



MSC Bellissima was named in Southampton in March this year

managers, national account managers, trade support... and we've just hired our first national training manager to develop a stronger training remit with the trade.”

This is full-blown, unrelenting expansion. There's no dipping of toe in the water here; it's an unceasing march towards glory. There was the naming of *MSC Bellissima* in Southampton in March and this month the UK launch event for *MSC Grandiosa*.

Oh, and the line is entering the luxury market, with four luxury cruise ships to be built by Italian ship builder Fincantieri. The first is due in 2023: “I'm limited to what I can say at the moment, but it'll be incredibly exciting,” says Williams. It's a miracle he and his team get any sleep.

An unmissable opportunity

However, Williams did not join the cruise sector, and subsequently MSC Cruises, to sit back and have it easy. After more than a decade at Royal Caribbean



International, including a stint as head of sales, an opportunity emerged to work with Antonio Paradiso, MSC's MD UK & Ireland. Williams describes it as “a turning point for MSC”, as the company “had dabbled in the UK and Republic of Ireland but it had never been a strategic market for them”. Fast forward and the



line is now market leader in the Republic of Ireland and is growing in the UK. Williams explains: "There's a much greater understanding [of the brand]... when I joined, if I had gone out and asked someone 'have you seen one of our ships?', maybe one in 10 would say yes, and that would be old MSC. Now we have globalised and the product is becoming more appropriate for the UK and US market."

Evidence of this can be found in the decision to revamp *MSC Magnifica* for the line's longest ex-UK season. *MSC Magnifica* will undergo a transformation, adding 23 metres to the ship for an extra 7,000 square metres of space. The ship will sail 24 itineraries from Southampton, from May to October 2021, with voyages ranging from two to 14 nights. Destinations include the Canary Islands, Madeira, the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Baltics.

"It shows our serious commitment to the market," adds Williams. "We believe the UK still under-indexes in cruise and there's huge, huge potential."

The MSC commitment

At the same time as the *MSC Magnifica* announcement in September, Williams also revealed 10 trade commitments, including a personalised service to treat all agents as individuals and a guarantee of price parity. The purpose, he explains, is to reassure people, as "there is probably an element of nervousness about how big we will become".

"The time was right to cement that [reassurance] and give the trade – as we become a really large cruise line – that security that the things they love about us won't change. I want to be clear that our ways of working will not change. We will not lose what sets us apart – the flexible



MSC's expansion plans are on a grand scale...

...with every amenity passengers have come to know and love



and personalised service. We don't want a 'computer says no' scenario, one I've seen time and time again as companies grow."

The topic of companies changing inevitably brings the conversation on to the Thomas Cook situation. Williams admits "there are huge implications" and that the next 12 months will be difficult.

However, his positivity – which exudes from his personality – does not go into hiding, even at this juncture. "People will still take their holidays and others will pick up the business," he says.

"I think there's an opportunity for cruise now. Three million package holidays are

out of market. In 2020 you will see a shortage of holidays available and a great alternative is a cruise. We'd all sooner be in a situation where Thomas Cook was still in business, but they aren't here so we need to adapt and work ever harder. We need to work to plug that hole.

"I've always believed in retail travel. I think cruise is still considered a fairly complex purchase and customers want to talk to someone who understands. That's why our investment in training and developing the high street is so important. We are not here to play any more, we are deadly serious." ↓



AMY SHARPE

Coral Expeditions' UK sales manager fills us in on her favourite cruise destinations and how she escaped from a wasp-related emergency

Why is your cruise line the best?

We really know the waters around our home turf – the Kimberley, Australia; Tasmania; the Islands of Indonesia; New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. We take our purpose-built tropical expedition ships, which carry between 72 and 120 guests at a time, to these incredible places on unforgettable voyages.

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

Sir David Attenborough. He gets right into the heart of the place he is visiting and has authentic experiences of the incredible wildlife and local culture. That is exactly what Coral Expeditions does.

How long have you worked for your cruise line?

Since the beginning of April 2019.

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

At a recent event we were having a drinks reception outside and a barrage of wasps started dive bombing headlong into my cocktail. I had to play it cool and hook them out one by one without too many people noticing – it was far too good for wasps to drink.

“We take guests to incredible places on unforgettable voyages”

What's your favourite ship in the fleet?

Coral Adventurer – she is our newest vessel and the first I sailed on.

What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked about cruise?

I was once asked why there were no river cruise ships in England, like there are on the Rhine and Danube. I had to point out that beyond Putney the bridges are somewhat too low to get such a huge vessel under.

Which port would you prefer to disembark at and why?

Broome, Australia, is an incredible port to disembark. There's the beautiful Cable Beach, amazing seafood, camel rides on the beach and if the time is right guests can see the tidal phenomenon called the Staircase to the Moon, caused by the full moon reflecting off the exposed mudflats. It's an amazing optical illusion.

And where would you opt to stay on board and why?

I might choose to stay on board in Cenderawasih Bay, West Papua, on our Spice Islands and Raja Ampat cruise. They have huge whale sharks that you can dive with and although I know they are just enormous fish, I'd take a while to get into that water.

Which cruise is on your bucket list?

We have a Komodo Dragons and Krakatoa cruise through the Indonesian Islands that visits the Komodo dragons at Rinca Island and orangutans at Tanjung Puting National Park.

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

I would definitely stay in travel. My first job after university was with a coach tour operator. I did spend some time working for a corporate bank, but couldn't wait to get back into travel. ⚓



Seeing a Komodo dragon in the wild is one of Amy's must-dos



There's no extra charge for guests sailing solo on *Star Clipper*

Choose cruise

SINGLE MINDED

In this regular series of articles, we look at converting new-to-cruise clients. This month we compare two holidays suitable for solo travellers

Travelling alone is no longer the preserve of the elderly or the unsociable: in fact, solo travel is rising, with 10 per cent of cruise passengers going it alone, say the latest figures from CLIA. The reasons behind the trend are many: whether it's feeling safe and secure aboard the ship, the chance to make new friends



Exquisite Ko Hong is one of the southern islands of Thailand

and enjoy their company, and being able to explore lots of different destinations with minimum fuss and maximum comfort, solo cruising is taking off in a big way.

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

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

In fact, the only bugbear is the thorny issue of single supplements, but in the example below, the *Star Clipper* cruise does not charge extra for those travelling alone. ⚓

Thailand's many wonders are on the cruise itinerary...



...including local traditions...



...and the glorious coastline of Phuket

HOTEL VS CRUISE

ITINERARY	DESTINATIONS VISITED	ACCOMMODATION	DINING	AMENITIES	PRICE
Seven nights' full board on <i>Star Clipper</i> cruise around Thailand, departing 1 February 2020, Heathrow return flights and transfers	Phuket, Patong, Ko Butang, Penang, Ko Adang, Ko Rok Nok, Pang Nga Bay, Ko Hong, Ko Similan	One-night pre-cruise B&B stay, Seaview Hotel, Patong. On board <i>Star Clipper</i> , guests have a single cabin with TV, phone and air conditioning	The elegant dining room serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner on an open-seating basis. No reservations are required.	Swimming pool, bar, restaurant, piano bar, plus an Edwardian-style library	From £2,825pp including flights, transfers, full board, teas and coffees. Watersports are also included
Thailand Tour with Just You	Bangkok, Ayutthaya, Phitsanulok, Sukhothai & Lampang, Chiang Mai, Cha-Am	FuramaXclusive Sathorn hotel, Silom, Topland Hotel, Phitsanulok, Lampang River Lodge, Chang Wat, Amora Hotel, Chiang Mai and Regent Cha Am Beach resort in Phetchaburi	Breakfast, lunch and dinner included, plus welcome drinks & farewell get-together	Bangkok city tour, Thai classical dance show, visits to areas of cultural interest, eg the Wat Yai temple, a private monks' blessing ceremony, and a day out at the Elephant Nature Park	From £2,838pp: flights are with Qatar Airways via Doha

Itineraries supplied courtesy of Ponders Travel; for more information call 01954 232 802, visit ponderstravel.co.uk, or contact sales@ponderstravel.co.uk

Fast Facts

For six years *Allure of the Seas* was the largest cruise ship sailing the oceans, but in 2016 she lost her title to her sister ship, *Harmony of the Seas*. Royal Caribbean's Oasis-class ship is going under the knife, though, for an extreme makeover, and is set to debut her shiny new look next May in Barcelona in time for the summer 2020 season. Each deck will be amplified, with new slides and rides like the Ultimate Abyss and the Perfect Storm trio, and a grand two-tier Music Hall.

.....

18
DECKS

2,800
CABINS

9
COMPLIMENTARY
RESTAURANTS

10
SPECIALTY
RESTAURANTS

5
POOLS

5,492
PASSENGERS

2,384
CREW

Allure of the Seas



Entertainment

On a ship that has 18 decks of entertainment, it's hard to know where to start. Children will love the water parks, thrill-seekers should head to the zip wire and in the evening, guests can take in a West End-style show.



Pool

There's almost as much water on board as there is off. The ship has not only a main pool, but beach and sports pools, plus Splashaway Bay, which will feature three slides, fountains and a splash pad for the littlest passengers.





Cabins

Due to its sheer size, *Allure* can offer cruisers sea-view balcony cabins, and more affordable balcony cabins overlooking the boardwalk. The almost 3,000 cabins range from loft-style suites to cosy interior staterooms.



Bars

It's quite a feat to be able to say you have the most bars at sea, and the renovation will see the addition of the Bionic Bar, with robotic bartenders, plus pool-side bar The Lime & Coconut, El Loco Fresh and Playmakers Sports Bar.



Adventure Ocean

All-new Adventure Ocean is where younger kids can choose their own immersive and interactive activities in redesigned areas. These include whimsical rooms with climbable creations at Play Place; hands-on art, science and tech fun at Workshop; physical games at Arena; chilling at the Hangout; AO Babies for tots and AO Junior, specially created for three-to-five-year-olds; plus teen spaces featuring gaming consoles, music and movies.



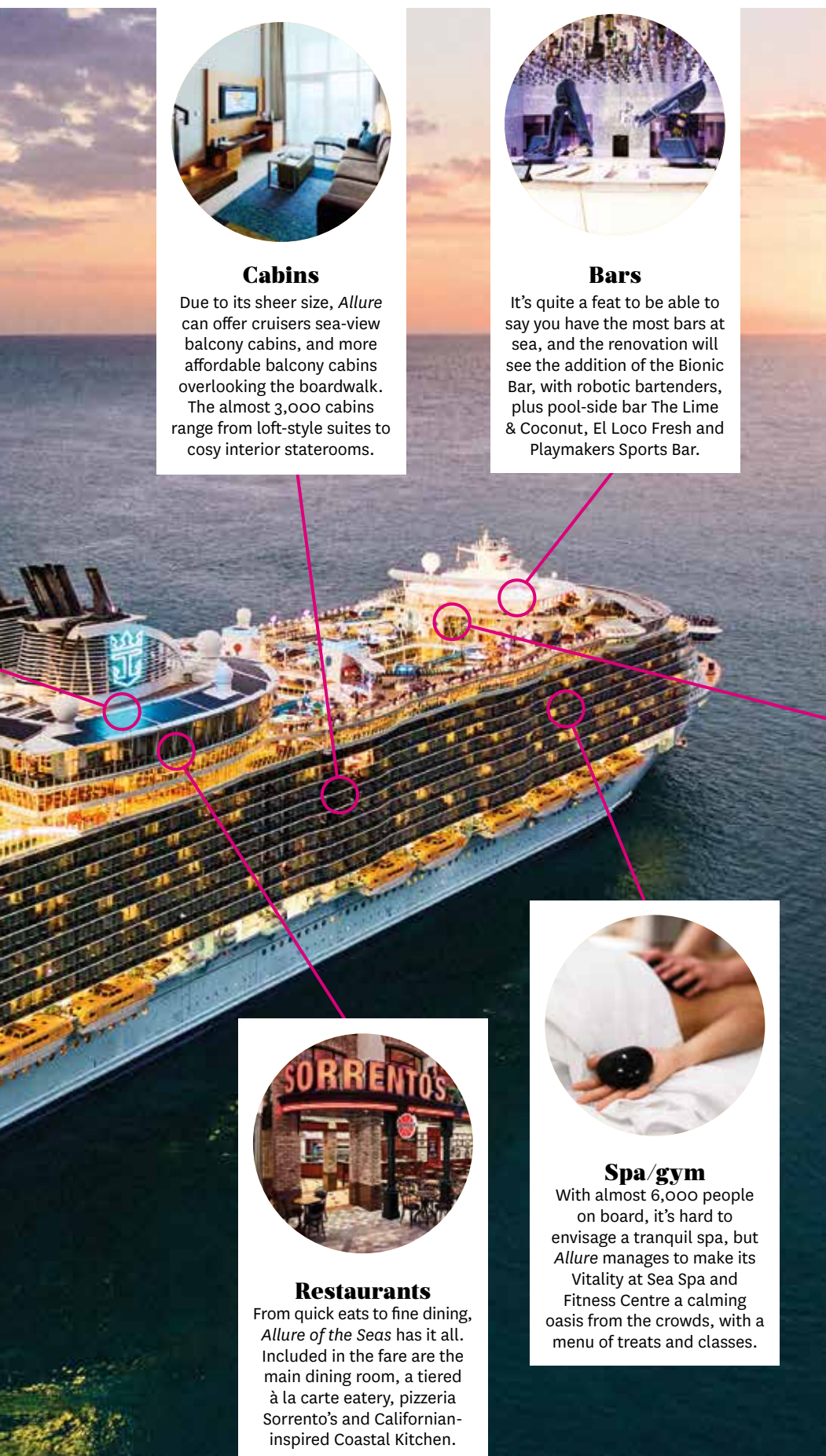
Spa/gym

With almost 6,000 people on board, it's hard to envisage a tranquil spa, but *Allure* manages to make its Vitality at Sea Spa and Fitness Centre a calming oasis from the crowds, with a menu of treats and classes.



Restaurants

From quick eats to fine dining, *Allure of the Seas* has it all. Included in the fare are the main dining room, a tiered à la carte eatery, pizzeria Sorrento's and Californian-inspired Coastal Kitchen.





1

1 To the moon

Cunard is known for its fashion-themed sailings, but that's not the only cruise with a difference it offers. In 2020 it will again celebrate World Space Week on a transatlantic crossing on *Queen Mary 2*, from Southampton to New York, departing 2 October 2020. This voyage will pay particular attention to women in space and the role they have played in space travel. Guests will get to hear from speakers in the fields of astronomy, astrophysics, aerospace and astronautics. Prices for the seven-night cruise start from £1,099pp.

6
OF THE BEST

Themed itineraries

A cruise isn't just about beautiful ships and glamorous destinations. Special-interest sailings offer something different. **Gary Peters** reports

2 Raise a glass

Think themed cruise and undoubtedly a wine voyage comes to mind. There are many to choose from, across different lines, but some of the most comprehensive can be found with SeaDream Yacht Club. Working with wine director Martin Arentz, the line offers two complimentary wine tastings on every wine voyage, as well as exclusive tastings followed by a themed winemaker's dinner. The line also has a selection of excursions designed to complement the on-board offering. A seven-day Nice to Civitavecchia voyage, departing 26 September 2020, is priced at approximately £4,100pp.

3 Centre stage

Have guests who enjoy the majesty of Broadway? Crystal Cruises has revealed 20 new Crystal on Broadway itineraries, on *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity*, which will welcome on board Broadway stars and, occasionally, choreographers, directors and costume designers. Guests will get to experience a range of stage productions, solo acts, Q&A sessions and presentations from special guests. The sailings have been developed as part of Crystal's partnership with multi-Tony Award-winning producer Kevin McCollum. Prices for a 13-night European Cultural Canvas cruise, departing 19 August 2020, start from approximately £3,700pp.



4

4 Cruise with Jane

The one and only Jane McDonald, also known as the Queen of Cruise, has delighted guests by organising her own cruise, in collaboration with Floating Festivals. The seven-night Sail Away with Jane McDonald voyage, on *Anthem of the Seas*, will start in Southampton, completing a round-trip from the Hampshire city visiting Cherbourg, Vigo and Lisbon. McDonald will delight guests with two theatre performances and a Q&A session. The cruise departs on 20 September 2020. Visit floatingfestivals.co.uk for more information.

5 Power of the press

Now, this one is a bit out there. As part of its Spotlight On... lectures Regent Seven Seas Cruises has a dedicated itinerary focusing on broadcasting and journalism. Departing on 4 August 2020 on *Seven Seas Voyager*, the sailing provides a chance to hear from a number of American journalists and broadcasters on the state of journalism worldwide and the importance of media in today's world. Prices start from £6,089pp.

3

5



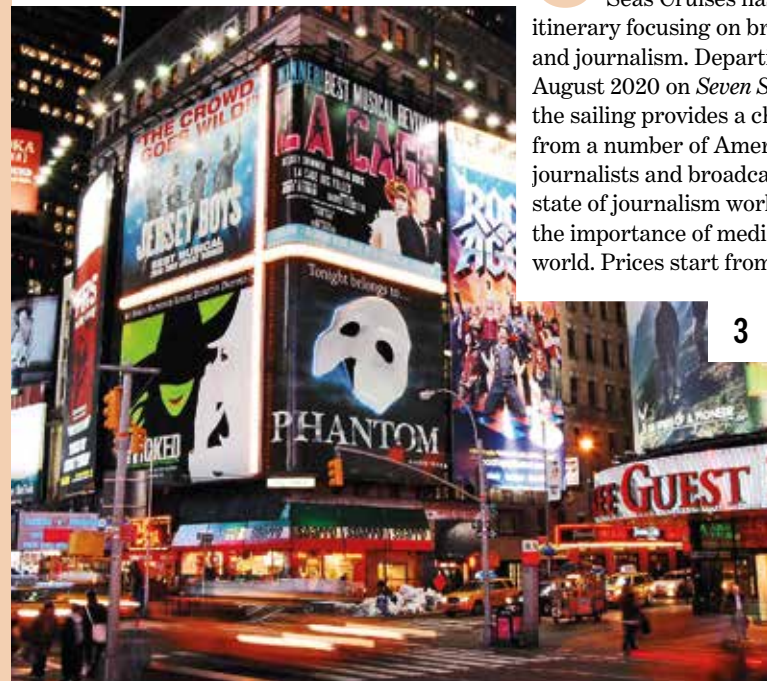
6 Tee off with Hapag-Lloyd

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' golf packages include the opportunity to play a few holes with PGA professionals at some of the finest greens on the planet, such as Pinnacle Point Golf Club in South Africa, or St Andrews in Scotland. Back on board, guests can improve their handicap with some practice on state-of-the-art golf simulators, or simply unwind and rest and relax before the next day's play. The 13-day Lisbon to Lisbon round-trip cruise on *MS Europa 2* departs 17 April 2020. Prices for a five-course basic package start from approximately £1,100pp. ⚓

6



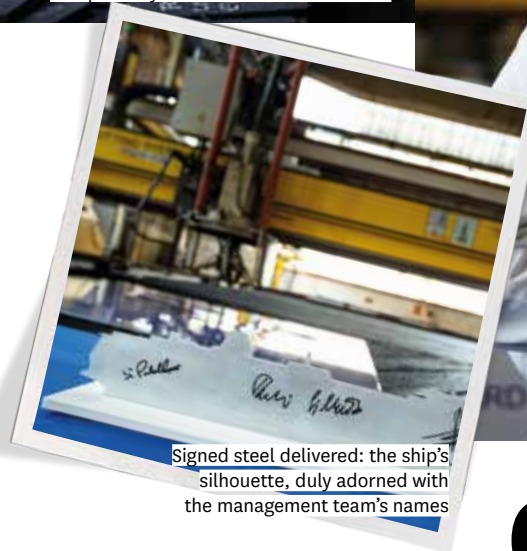
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An outline of the ship in steel is lowered into place by two of the Fincantieri team

Gilberto Tobaldi, shipyard director, Fincantieri, and Josh Weinstein, president of Carnival UK, toast the great Cunard project



Signed steel delivered: the ship's silhouette, duly adorned with the management team's names

Cunard

It was to Naples that *Cruise Trade News* travelled to join Cunard as it celebrated the steel-cutting of the fourth ship in its current fleet. The as yet unnamed ship is set to enter service in 2022, with bookings commencing next year.

Speaking at the Fincantieri shipyard, Cunard president Simon Palethorpe said: "After years of planning and design, we are delighted to see building works

commence on our newest ship. The 249th Cunarder will be our fourth luxury liner for the 21st century."

Cunard is working with a host of designers to create the interiors for the ship, including creative director Adam D Tihany. Cunard has also announced the commissioning of a sculpture crafted from the first piece of metal cut for the new ship. Sculptor Sam Shendi will complete the work, which will be displayed on board.



Sam Shendi is creating a sculpture from the same piece of metal as the ship's first steel

Visitors at the event enjoyed gracious Italian hospitality





The Medusa Hotel in Naples was the venue for a lavish launch party dinner

Fincantieri shipyard workers showed their appreciation for the speeches



Steel for the ship is cut by high-powered laser



Cunard president Simon Palethorpe addressed visitors and the Fincantieri team



The shipyard is on the outskirts of southern Italian city Naples

The Sky Suites on board *Sky Princess* offer the biggest balconies at sea

Seagoing Style

Planetariums and futuristic glass domes are among the innovations taking cruising to new heights.
Jeannine Williamson reports



The Owner's Suites on *Oceania Riviera* have plenty of space – and a self-playing piano

Hardly a day goes by when there's not an interior decorating programme on television, but designers are not just confining their talents to dry land. As consumers become increasingly style conscious, cruise lines are taking note and introducing head-turning design concepts at sea.

From state-of-the-art inventions in public areas to staterooms fashioned by some of the world's top creative talent, the newest ships are boasting a raft of innovative and design-led structural and internal elements.

P&O Cruises' new 5,200-passenger flagship, *Iona*, which is to be launched in May 2020, will feature a two-deck SkyDome, the first of its kind in the industry. Connecting passengers with the sea, sky and shoreline, by day the glass-domed area, with a pool, loungers, greenery and artwork will provide an unrestricted all-weather viewing area. At night the swimming pool will be transformed into a stage hosting spectacular aerial acrobatics shows and parties beneath the stars.

P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow says: "SkyDome promises to be one of *Iona's* star attractions, providing guests with a magical venue in which to spend quality time whatever the weather.

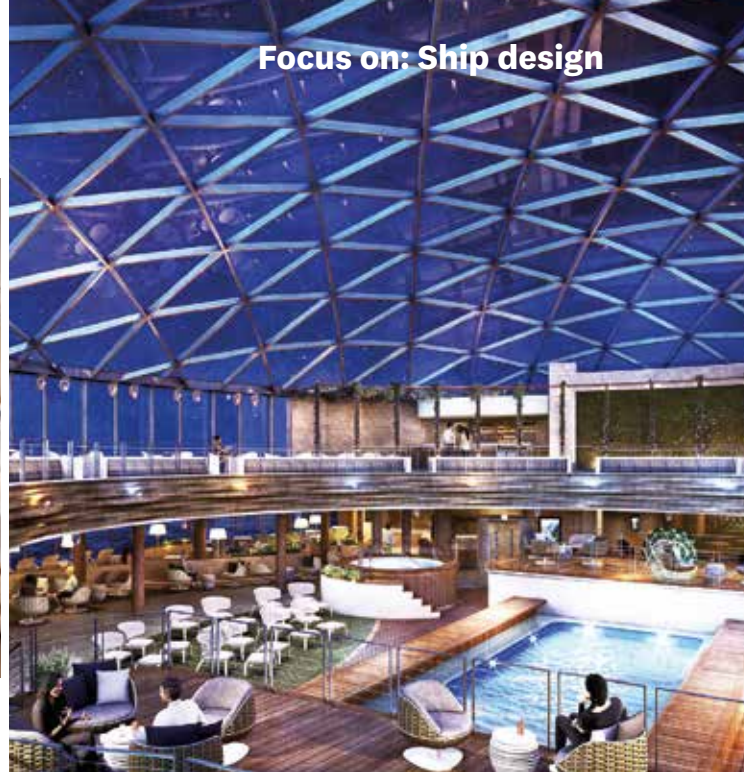
"With stunning views of the ocean by day and of starry skies at night, I'm confident that this extraordinary venue will prove popular with our guests, whether they are early birds or night owls. With sunshine, swimming, dining and dancing all in one contemporary, visually spectacular space, SkyDome will raise the bar for entertainment spaces at sea."

Last year a dome of different kind made its debut on *Viking Orion*, the first of Viking's ocean ships to boast a planetarium, where passengers can view panoramic films on exploration and space. It was the first 3D planetarium on a ship, the world's highest definition planetarium of its type and the first mechanically isolated dome, which means it can be used while cruising.

Sister vessel *Viking Jupiter* is the second ship in the fleet with an Explorer's Dome. Resident



Oceania's *Riviera* Owner's Suites feature Ralph Lauren designs



The pool on *Iona's* SkyDome turns into a stage by night



The Magic Carpet on board *Celebrity Edge* is a unique feature among cruise ships

SELLING TIPS

- Ships now rival the best hotels
-
- Super stylish suites
-
- Suggest maiden voyages so clients can be the first to experience new designs
-
- Planetariums and talks to suit culture vultures
-
- Cool subject matter for Instagram fans

astronomers lead star-gazing sessions and give talks on selected cruises. Viking's executive director of ocean operations, Ralph de Klijn, adds: "The Explorers' Dome is a versatile space that operates as a high-tech planetarium, as well as showing films and other programming in 2 or 3D."

Moving with the times

Celebrity Cruises' 2,900-passenger *Celebrity Edge* features the Magic Carpet platform that moves up and down the side of the ship. Designed by leading British architect Tom Wright, it is the world's first cantilevered floating platform and the highlight of the ship's exterior.

Inside, interior designer Kelly Hoppen, who has appeared as an investor on the BBC's *Dragon's Den* and as a judge on *The Great Interior Design Challenge*, has designed the suites and SEA Thermal area in the spa.

"This is a ship that defies expectations, elevating cruise luxury to a whole new level," explains the line's vice-president and managing

Focus on: Ship design

director, UK, Ireland and Asia, Jo Rzymowska. “There are four more of these Edge-class ships on order and the next, *Celebrity Apex*, will be based in the UK when it launches in Southampton next year.”

Over at Oceania Cruises there is the OceaniaNEXT fleet refurbishment programme that’s revitalising a number of ships in the fleet. The line’s *Riviera* left dry-dock earlier this year with three next-generation Owner’s Suites furnished exclusively with the Ralph Lauren Home Collection.

Spacious and airy, the grand rooms feature dramatic sea views, floor-to-ceiling windows dressed with Ralph Lauren Home Grimaldi-weave sail fabric and self-playing pianos. Similar enhancements will be carried out on Riviera’s sister-ship, *Marina*, in May 2020.

Future proofed

Princess Cruises’ newest 3,600-passenger ships, *Sky Princess* and *Enchanted Princess*, have the largest balconies – around 1,000 square feet – ever offered by a cruise line. The two Sky Suites, centrally located on the top decks, measure around the size of half a tennis court. They provide a private vantage point for the Movies Under the Stars



Viking’s *Orion* is the first ship with a 3D planetarium



Celebrity *Edge* will be followed by more ships in her class

“Lines are partnering with award-winning, non-cruise designers to up their game”

screen, offer 270-degree panoramic views and sleep up to five guests. Inside, there are two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a dining area with skylight. *Sky Princess* launched in October this year and *Enchanted Princess* arrives in June 2020.

Princess Cruises president Jan Swartz comments: “Our two new Sky Suites reflect Princess Cruises’ continued commitment to offer new and expansive accommodation that fully meets the needs of our guests who wish to explore the world in ultimate comfort.”

Luxury cruise company Cunard has appointed world-renowned designer Adam D Tihany as creative director of the much-anticipated and as yet unnamed new ship (see page 30), joining the fleet in 2022. Tihany, who has worked with some of the world’s leading hotels

including The Beverly Hills Hotel, Belmond Hotel Cipriani and The Oberoi New Delhi, will oversee the entire interior design process.

“The name Cunard is obviously magical and I’m very excited to be involved in this project,” says Tihany. “Guests can expect a much lighter, contemporary feel, but crucially it will still feel like a Cunard ship, and Cunard’s loyal guests will feel very much at home. The new ship will celebrate Cunard’s British heritage but with a whisper, not a shout.”

Summing up the attention to detail being focused on new ship design, CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer says: “As the cruise industry looks to attract even the most discerning of travellers, lines are partnering with award-winning, non-cruise designers to up their game with unique and forward-thinking interior and exterior designs.

“Working with such designers means that lines are creating ships of today and the future that meet the growing consumer demand for holiday experiences that are immersive, modern and technologically advanced.” ⚓

ITINERARIES

P&O Cruises

- A seven-night Norwegian Fjords round-trip Southampton cruise on *Iona*, departing 30 May 2020. Prices from £789pp. 0344 338 8592

📍 pocruises.com

Viking Cruises

- A 14-night British Isles Explorer Bergen to London cruise on *Viking Jupiter*, departing 3 May 2020. Prices from £6,040pp, including flights. 0800 298 9700

📍 vikingcruises.co.uk

Princess Cruises

- A seven-night Western Caribbean round-trip Fort Lauderdale cruise on *Sky Princess*, departing 1 February 2020. Prices from £589pp, cruise only. 0344 338 8663

📍 princesscruises.com



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A-Rosa has long given a warm welcome to multi-generational holidaymakers

Generation Game

The days when children weren't heard – let alone seen – on river cruises is a thing of the past, says **Jeannine Williamson**

Self-driving is an option with lines such as Le Boat

There was a time when the words 'families' and 'river cruising' would never be uttered in the same sentence. However, all that has changed with a growing number of

family-friendly sailings designed to float everyone's boat – irrespective of their age – plus a new ship being specifically designed for multigenerational holidays.

From exploring fairytale castles on the Rhine to a spooky Venetian ghost walk, or meeting French cowboys in the Camargue, the whole family can be immersed in authentic experiences.

CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer explains: "Multigenerational travel, where grandparents, parents and children all go on holiday, has grown in popularity over recent years. However, this trend has only recently been seen in the river cruise sector. With the investment in building new ships that boast multiple dining areas, swimming pools, expanded spas and more, a river cruise is the perfect fit for families.

"On board they can have shared experiences, yet also separate for me-time, and in port they can enjoy excursions, such as days out cycling."

Tauck pioneered family river cruises with the Tauck Bridges programme and in 2020 will launch the industry's first-ever family cruise on Portugal's Douro, which will be the sixth Bridges itinerary. Starting with a land-stay in the capital, Lisbon, the five-night cruise will feature hiking and cycling tours.

Tauck's senior vice-president river and



Cooking sessions such as Uniworld's pizza workshops can extend children's skills

small ship cruising, Katharine Bonner, says: "Our Blue Danube: Family Riverboat Adventure debuted in 2010 and in the years since we've continued to lead the category, adding additional Bridges family river cruises on the Rhine, Rhone, Seine and Douro, as well as a second itinerary on the Danube that will operate in December and take in the region's holiday season traditions.

Family fun

A-Rosa River Cruises has a long association with multigenerational cruising and is the only line offering free cruises for children under 15 on all itineraries, apart from the Douro where a 25 per cent discount is available.

In spring 2021 the line will take family cruising to new levels with a vessel specifically designed for such groups. The ship, which will mainly sail on the Rhine, will feature large family cabins sleeping up to five, a separate children's pool and a kids' club and restaurant area where young guests can eat together.

"We have worked hard to develop a river cruise concept aimed at families and multigenerational groups travelling together in a fun and relaxed way," says A-Rosa managing director UK & Ireland

Sell it

Uniworld has a seven-night Venice & the Gems of Northern Italy itinerary, departing 28 June, 5 July and 12 July 2020, from £2,519pp, £2,009 for children's places, including flights. 0808 168 9110.

uniworld.com

Tauck's seven-night Douro Discovery: A Family River Cruise in Portugal, departs 24 and 29 June, 4 and 9 July 2020, from £3,150pp, cruise only. 0800 810 8020.

tauck.co.uk

Le Boat has a seven-night, self-drive, self-catering cruise on the Canal du Midi in France departing 2 July 2020 from £1,369 per boat for a family of four, cruise only. 023 9222 2177.

leboat.co.uk



A-Rosa is building a ship that's targeted specifically at multi-generational groups

SELLING TIPS

- High level of inclusions makes it easy to budget
- Meals to suit different tastes included in the fare
- Increasing number of dedicated multigenerational sailings to choose from
- Plenty of quality time spent together
- Only having to pack and unpack once

Lucia Rowe. "In 2018 more than 2,400 children cruised with us and these numbers continue to grow.

"This new ship is a prototype on Europe's rivers and something we haven't seen before. It will open up river cruising to a completely different market segment with a host of new facilities and features tailored to the whole family.

"We want to attract the growing multigenerational sector and encourage a much younger audience to consider river cruising as a family holiday choice. I expect this new concept to be hugely popular with UK customers and we look forward to working with the UK trade to educate them on all that the ship will offer and how and who to sell it to."

Luxury boutique line Uniworld features special 'generations' departures,

Family-friendly CroisiEurope offers some free cruises for under-16s

with tailored programmes, events and excursions designed for families.

Dedicated hosts look after junior cruisers aged four to 12 and teen cruisers up to the age of 17. There is also a young travellers' lounge, and kids-only film nights are on offer. In 2020 the refurbished *SS La Venezia* will become the line's latest Super Ship and will feature a new 'generations' cruise. This gives children the chance to take part in a scavenger hunt through Venice, a Bolognese sauce workshop in food heaven Bologna and a pasta-making session led by the ship's chef.

In 2016 AmaWaterways introduced interconnecting cabins that are now available on seven ships, including *AmaMagna*, its recently launched vessel. *AmaMagna* is almost double the width of other modern river ships and offers family-style dining in a variety of its restaurants.

Worldwide cruises

Another line known for being family-friendly is CroisiEurope, which offers special sailings in Germany, Portugal, Spain and Italy during July and August

with free cruises for under-16s, adjoining cabins and no single cabin supplements for solo family members travelling in multigenerational groups.

Another option is a self-drive cruise and for fans of this type of holiday, Le Boat operates the world's largest fleet of vessels, with the highest number of destinations available in France. No previous experience is needed and holidays include detailed guides and pre-departure briefings.

Le Boat's managing director, Cheryl Brown, explains: "A canal boat holiday with Le Boat offers a unique opportunity to experience enchanting destinations from a completely different perspective, allowing boaters to choose an action-packed adventure or a slow-paced, relaxing chance to unwind.

"Ideal for multi-generational groups, our self-drive cruisers cater to parties of all sizes, allowing entire families to stay on board and explore their chosen region at their own pace. From local child-friendly attractions and dining, to cycling along the canal pathways, there is something for all the family and even dogs are welcome on board."

For families looking for river cruise adventures further afield, Pandaw has special promotions during school holidays where one or two children between the ages of five and 18 can travel free in a second cabin when accompanied by two adults. ⚓



On lines like Tauck, the family that sails together can also eat together

A monument to national heroes Minin and Pozharsky stands before St Basil's Cathedral, probably Russia's most photographed church



Real Russia

Gary Peters sails the waterways of this enigmatic country with Viking

I'm not sure what to expect on a week-long river cruise from Moscow to St Petersburg. I don't usually go in for all that 'trip of a lifetime' stuff but experiencing Russia has long been my aim – I have a morbid fascination with all things Soviet Union and the 1917 revolution – and a few days before departure I sense a shift in my attitude.

I know I'll see incredible sights – The Kremlin, Red Square, St Petersburg's gilded skyline and so on – and I'm fully expecting authentic Russian food and all the trappings on my new home, the *Viking Akun*, one of five ships Viking River Cruises has in the region.

I'm also intrigued to meet the Russian people, from the capital city to those living in the old-school Russia in places such as Kirillo or Yaroslavl, the latter in the Golden Ring, a group of historically important cities northeast of Moscow.

So, forgive my surprise when on my second night on board it's not the day's

excursion to the Kremlin that is the topic of conversation, but rather a hastily prepared idea to launch a podcast with a fellow guest. There's no debate as to how this has all come about: the wine-tasting event. What is up for consideration, though, is the contents of said podcast. It's either a wine-related ramble or a carefully constructed masterpiece of impressions. I should add it is my fellow guest who'll be starring in it; I'll probably agree to some back-seat role that fills me with envy when it rockets up the download charts.

Putin's office

As for the serious business on the trip, well, it's go big or go home. Of course I start at the Kremlin. This former fortress is busy. Busy with tourists. Busy with guards. Busy with... well, not tension, as Vladimir Putin is, I believe, away on business today. He apparently arrives via helicopter when the mood strikes him.

Its size is imposing, while the armoury museum showcases artefacts stretching

back throughout all of Russian history. Behind the walls and stern guards is the murky world of politics – tough decisions for tough people, and all that. However, I'm also in the midst of my own battle as I try to navigate the unceasing throng of people and stay within hailing distance of my tour guide.

It's worth it, though, as the grandeur of St Basil's Cathedral comes into view. Completed in 1560 by the order of Ivan the Terrible, it's one of the finest things I've ever seen. There really are worse things I could be doing on a Saturday morning.

Ludmilla's for tea

I'll say the same for my Sunday afternoon, which I spend in the small town of Uglich, most of the time in Ludmilla's house. What a woman. Over a glass of her home brew and cake she tells me that the property was originally built in 1936, in Stalin's time, and was intended for two families. Now it's just her, her grandkids when they visit,

and the German Shepherd that stands guard outside.

It's a different world entirely from Moscow, but that's good. This looks like the old Russia. Sure, capitalist influences are there but it's not in your face. Look closely and it resembles a place time left behind.

There's nothing old fashioned about my temporary home, however. I'm on the Waterways of the Tsars itinerary, a 13-day cruise on the 204-passenger *Akun*.

Named after the nephew of Viking ruler Rurik, the vessel was originally built in 1988 in what was then East Germany, but was refurbished in 2014 in St Petersburg to bring it up to the standards of Viking's European ships. It now features 102 outside staterooms with a river view, 67 of which are

ITINERARY

Moscow

Russia's cultural, economic and political heart brims with adventure.

Uglich

Founded in 1148, this small town on the Volga offers a striking contrast to the busy metropolis of Moscow.

Yaroslavl

The best way to see this Golden Ring city is on a walking tour.

Kuzino

The main highlight here is the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, founded by Saint Cyril in 1397.

Kizhi

The imposing three-tiered Transfiguration Church was built in 1714 without a single nail.

Mandrogly

This is an open-air museum that pays homage to the villages of Russia's past.

St Petersburg

The city has a long, fascinating history of revolution, rulers and rebranding.

The *Viking Akun* is one of five ships that the line has in the region

veranda staterooms – one of which is mine for the week.

The room is light and airy, with plenty of space – in fact I've stayed in smaller staterooms on ocean-going vessels – and that goes for everything from the storage space to the size of the balcony, which offers splendid views as the captain sails away from Moscow. Décor in the stateroom – and throughout the ship, for that matter – is understated. The bathroom is also well appointed, while the Grohe shower is one of the best I've used at sea.

At lunch and dinner I'm holed up in the Restaurant. This is really the hub of social life on board and the large circular tables are ideal for meeting new friends. There's a good selection on the menu, too. On one hand, classics available every night, such as beef fillet steak, roast chicken, or crème brûlée for dessert, while on the other, authentic regional cuisine – think dumplings, *trubochka*, a cream-filled pastry, or salmon *coulbiac*. The regional specialities change every night.

Guests can order from both sides, which is great for anyone unsure about

The enormous monastery of Kirillo-Belozersky also houses a museum



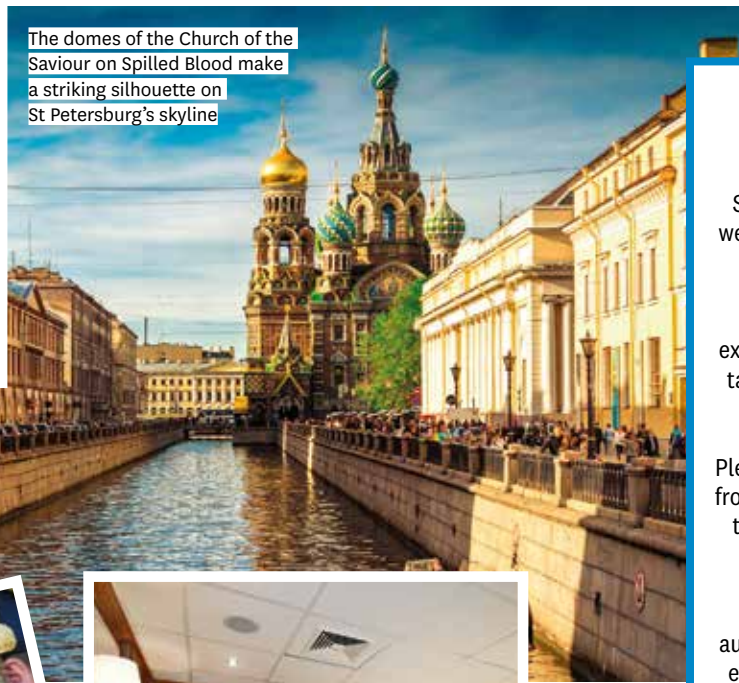
how their taste buds will react. Light snacks are also available at the coffee station and Panorama Bar – a great spot for views of the passing villages and Russian life. The majority of the scheduled evening entertainment is in the Sky Bar, and it is here I settle down for an eagerly anticipated quiz night.

History lessons

The game, called the Big Fat Quiz, doesn't disappoint. It's a full house and in no time people's competitive sides come to the fore. My team starts off with a respectable



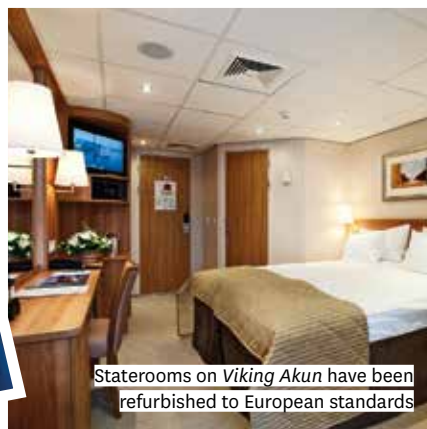
A calm ship's library offers a chance to gen up on the country's background



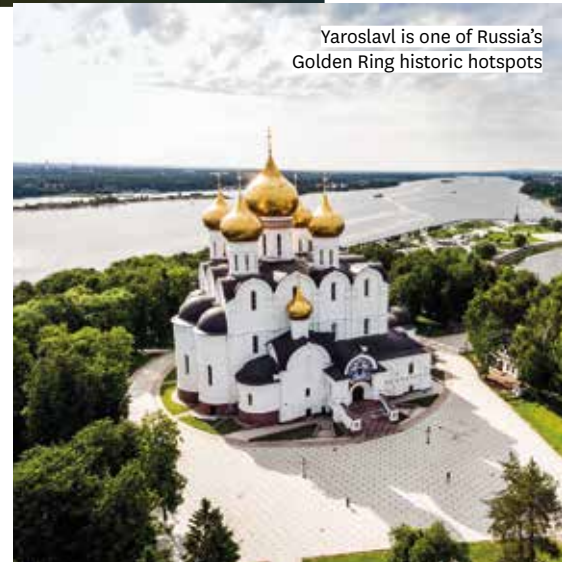
The domes of the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood make a striking silhouette on St Petersburg's skyline



Old-style Russia is on show in St Petersburg



Staterooms on Viking Akun have been refurbished to European standards



Yaroslavl is one of Russia's Golden Ring historic hotspots

SELLING TIPS

Spacious ship with well-appointed suites and amenities

Comprehensive excursions that really take guests into the heart of Russia

Plenty to do on board, from language lessons to a deep look into Russian history

Impressive mix of authentic cuisine and everyday favourites

director Margo is on hand to teach Russian (it's tough), while teatime is a great way to mingle.

There are also daily talks about our ports of call and excursions, cooking demonstrations, Q&A sessions with the captain, tours of the galley with the head chef, Leonidas, and a visit to the captain's bridge, where our guide, Vadim, takes the group through the technical aspects of the cruise – the ship's sailing season runs from May to October and is manned by 27 nautical crew, who are all friendly and professional.

The same can be said for everyone in Viking uniform – from hotel manager Karoline, who has been with Viking since 1997 when the company was established, to Kirby and Luigi, my flawless waiters for lunch and dinner – who are all first class. *Viking Akun* also has a delightful little gift store full of Russian dolls and other local products, as well as a tranquil library and communal sitting areas for those slower-pace days.

As for my departure, sadly I have to leave this welcoming, uneven, mysterious, remarkable land as we arrive in St Petersburg. It's been a blast and more meaningful than I ever expected. 📍

Details

● Viking's 13-day Waterways of the Tsars cruise departs 8 October 2020. Prices from £2,795pp

first round, but really comes into its own in the catchphrase round, where we storm to five correct answers. The lead proves unassailable, and victory is ours.

The joy of quiz night is followed by two more jam-packed days, first in Yaroslavl. Founded in 1010 by Prince Yaroslavl the Wise of Kiev, this city is home to the first Russian theatre, built in 1750, and is famous for its promenade, believed one of the finest along the Volga. We take in countless churches and buildings from before and after the 1917 revolution.

I also visit the Kirillo-Belozersky monastery, founded in 1397, Kizhi Island, populated as far back as the 15th century, and the village of Mandrogy, my highlight of the cruise – a peaceful yet energetic, off-the-beaten-track kind of place.

Much of what I learn comes from the wonderful tour escorts, including Sasha, who delves into Russia's 20th century history, from the last Tsar, Nicholas II, all the way through the revolution and the birth and collapse of the Soviet state. My fellow guests and I are enthralled.

It's just one of many activities on board that keep guests entertained. Programme



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CALICO JACK is BACK

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Cruise
JAMAICA

DESTINATION SPECIAL



Royal Caribbean reveals second Perfect Day island

Royal Caribbean International will create what it claims is the first carbon-neutral private cruise destination in the world in Vanuatu.

The line's second Perfect Day island – Perfect Day at Lelepa – will be built with sustainability features designed to safeguard the island's ecosystems.

Cox Architecture, a long-standing and sustainable architectural firm in Australia, will serve as the lead architect for the project.

Royal Caribbean International president and CEO Michael Bayley said: "We believe our destinations should be sustainably designed. That idea goes beyond simply protecting the ecological features of Lelepa and includes showing respect for the people and traditions that make this a special place."



44 **Hotlist**

The latest news from the hottest places on the planet, with thrilling releases for 2020 and beyond from Saga, P&O and CMV

46 **Southeast Asia**

A voyage to Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Singapore, Thailand and their neighbours puts guests in touch with the culture, wildlife and spirit of a very special place



HOTLIST

ALL THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE
WORLD'S MOST EXCITING PORTS OF CALL

The 83-night Saga journey
will take in Rio de Janeiro



Saga's grand voyage

Saga Cruises has unveiled details of seven new sailings for early 2021, including an 83-night cruise in South America.

The voyage, *Spirit of Discovery's* longest journey yet, will leave Southampton on 6 January 2021. It will visit the Amazon, Cape Horn, Punta Arenas, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and other destinations. Prices start from £17,324pp.

Spirit of Adventure, launching in August 2020, will sail six European voyages from January to March 2021, including the

14-night Constellations of the Canaries, and a 16-night Norwegian Aurora sailing.

A Taste of the Mediterranean is a 15-night springtime cruise to Barcelona, Valencia and Cartagena, and an eight-night Scandinavian Rhythms itinerary visiting Copenhagen, Gothenburg and other ports.

There's a focus on well-being during the 16-night Exotic Morocco and the Canaries sailing, with guided hikes and outdoor yoga, while the Beautiful Canaries cruise will call at Lisbon and Madeira.

See the world with CMV

Cruise & Maritime Voyages is offering guests the chance to visit 24 countries during its 120-night world cruise, sailing on *Columbus*.

Departing London Tilbury on 6 January 2021, the cruise will call at 39 ports, including some in the Caribbean, South Sea Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and more.

Other highlights include visits to the islands of the South Pacific, the Great Barrier Reef, Kuala Lumpur, and Kenya's Tsavo National Park.

Columbus will also call in at the remote Tristan da Cunha, an island in the Atlantic between South America and Africa, before sailing to Brazil and calling in at Rio de Janeiro. Prices start from £8,999pp.



Kenya's acclaimed Tsavo National Park is one of the country's largest



New Zealand's wildlife is part of the attraction of these cruises

Explore subantarctic islands

Heritage Expeditions has released a series of voyages to Subantarctic islands on its polar research vessels, *Spirit of Enderby* and *Akademik Shokalskiy*.

The small-ship line will visit six tiny groups of islands – the Bounty Islands, the Antipodes, the Snares, the Auckland Islands, Campbell Island and Australia's UNESCO-listed Macquarie Island.

Guests will be able to admire a diverse ecosystem of species, including New Zealand fur seals, sea lions, elephant seals and penguins.

Itineraries include:

- The eight-day Forgotten Islands of the South Pacific, departing 3 January 2020 and 23 December 2020. Prices start at approximately £3,700pp
- The 11-day Beyond Fiordland: New Zealand's Wildest Islands, departing 13 December 2019. Prices from approximately £4,900pp
- The 13-day Galapagos of the Southern Ocean, departing 1 and 3 December 2019, 30 November and 11 December 2020. Prices from approximately £5,700pp



Mediterranean ports feature in P&O's plans for 2021/22

P&O goes big for 2021/22 options

P&O Cruises will visit more than 68 countries as part of its summer 2021 and winter 2022 programme.

The line has more than 400 itineraries on offer, including new ship *Iona's* second year of itineraries, featuring the Norwegian fjords and a winter season of Spain, Portugal, the Canary Islands, plus a new Mediterranean season for *MS Azura* in summer 2021.

P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow said of the new programme: "P&O Cruises offers much more than just a holiday. The world is full of life-enriching experiences that give our guests the chance to delve deeper, to really get under the skin of a destination and explore more while creating life-long memories."

Other highlights include:

- New alternating 14-night Western Mediterranean and Baltic cruises on *Ventura* in summer 2021
- *Oceana* to operate a 2021 summer season of 12-night Spain, Portugal and Canary Islands and seven-night Southern Cruise Breaks and two-night short breaks
- Winter 2022 sees *Aurora* offer a world cruise, its first since 2017, on a western circumnavigation of the world in 99 nights
- *Arcadia* will embark on its first-ever transit of the Amazon in winter 2022 as part of its 55-night Grand Tour, taking in the Caribbean and Central America



The 312-passenger *Star Breeze* will be heading for Alaska

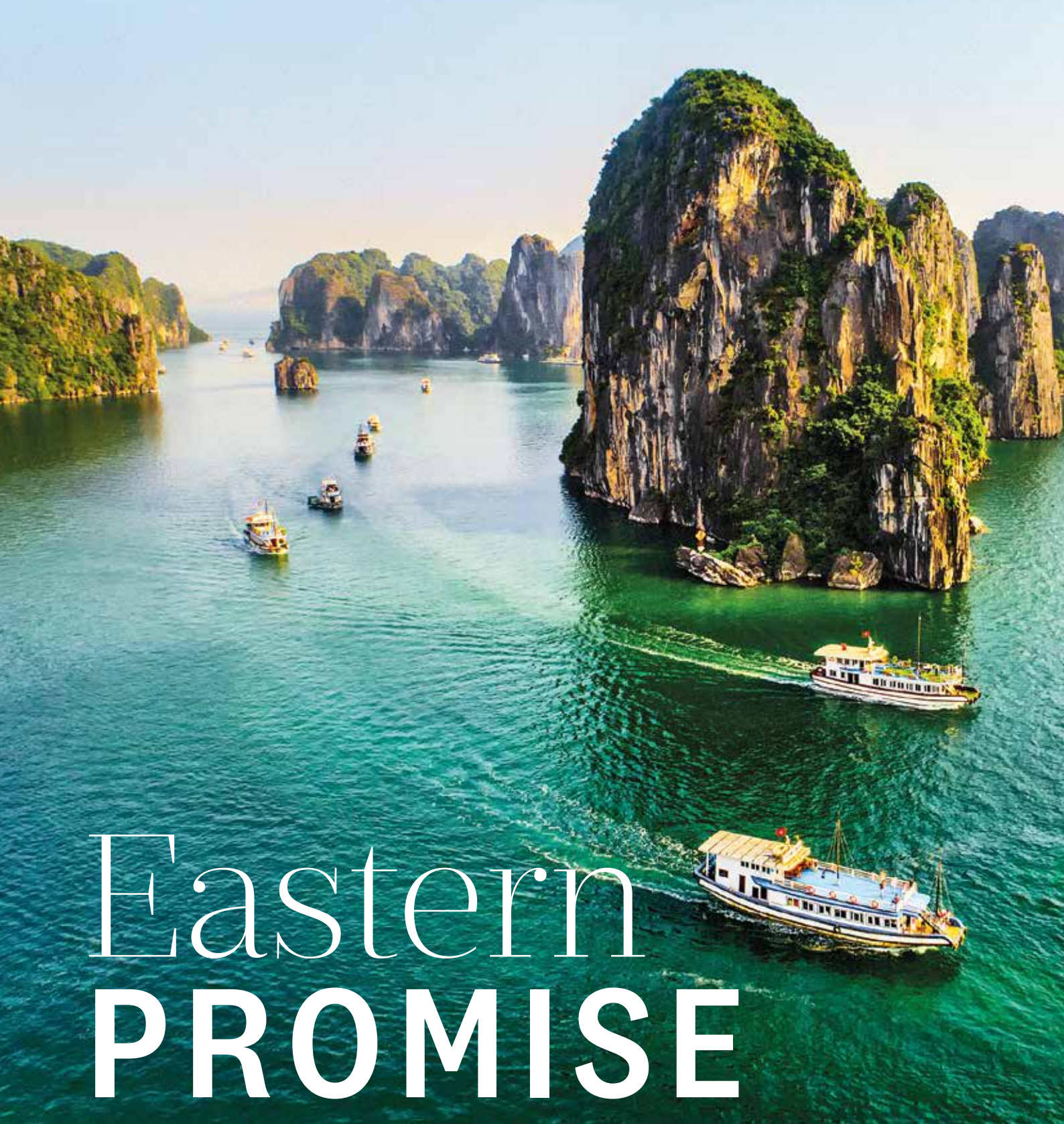
Windstar unveils new Alaska programme

Windstar Cruises is offering nine Alaskan adventures from June through to September 2021, on four itineraries, including a new seven-day option from Vancouver to Juneau.

The 2021 expeditions include Zodiac rides and kayaking in Icy Bay, a remote fjord near Prince William Sound that is part of the Wrangell-Saint Elias Wilderness. Also new for 2021 are excursions on the White Pass & Yukon

narrow-gauge train from Skagway, catamaran cruising along fjords, and canoeing on a mountain lake.

All Alaska sailings will take place aboard the reimagined 312-passenger *Star Breeze*, which features 50 new suites, two new restaurants, an enhanced spa and fitness centre, and more. Prices start at approximately £2,430pp. Visit windstarcruises.com for a full list of itineraries.



Eastern PROMISE

With its blend of modern attractions and age-old cultural sights, a cruise in Southeast Asia will appeal to a wide range of passengers, says **Heidi Fuller-Love**



Halong Bay in Vietnam is one of the area's geological marvels

A chance to immerse themselves in local culture may appeal to guests



Stretching from Beijing in the north to Bali in the south, Southeast Asia offers powder-white beaches, unique wildlife encounters and a host of fascinating cultural attractions.

"It is easy to see why so many holidaymakers choose a cruise to Southeast Asia with its abundance of UNESCO World Heritage sites, year-round tropical climate and wealth of local culture," says Princess Cruises vice-president UK & Europe Tony Roberts.

Since this region is a rapidly growing market, there are plenty of different itineraries to suit all ages and budgets. Seabourn senior vice-president of global marketing & sales Chris Austin says the region attracts "naturally curious travellers, history buffs and adventure seekers alike".

Whether it's the striking limestone islands of Hanoi's Halong Bay, Cambodia's legendary UNESCO Angkor Wat temple complex or the natural beauty of Malaysia, a cruise is the perfect way to explore.

Iconic as standard

As Silversea's sales director UK & Ireland, Connie Georgiou, explains: "Southeast Asia is a melting pot of culture, tradition and modernity. Highlights include the staggering natural beauty of Vietnam, the serenity of Myanmar and UNESCO Heritage Site Palawan, which really is one of the most spectacular islands in the world – all these marvels can be discovered during a cruise."

Shore excursions also offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit iconic sights such as China's Great Wall or Myanmar's Buddhist pagodas. "Seeing the region from the water also enables guests to appreciate the diversity of nature, to sail between numerous small islands and to visit waterfalls, forests, villages, temples and pristine beaches – there is complete submersion into a diverse culture and the spectacular scenery, and the

"Seeing the region from the water allows guests to appreciate the diversity of nature"

opportunity to see a huge variety of wildlife, on land, in the sky and in the water," enthuses Star Clippers UK general manager Fay McCormack.

Southeast Asia cruises generally run in the winter or spring, when it's warm and there's less chance of rain, although some companies, including Holland America Line and Princess Cruises, have sailings year-round.

Nevertheless: "Whenever you choose to travel there's no doubt that a Southeast Asia cruise provides a unique chance to tick off many destinations while unpacking only once," says Marella Cruises head of trading and planning Neil Duncan.

Discovery in every corner

Shorter itineraries generally travel between Singapore and Hong Kong, visiting ports in Vietnam and Thailand en route, but there are longer sailings and expedition cruises, too.

Austin adds: "We even have cruises that visit the Indonesian archipelago where guests may participate in exciting optional excursions led by skilled expedition teams in Komodo and Surabaya, Indonesia."

Passengers can also extend their stay with a river cruise along the Mekong, Irrawaddy or



The Century Paragon sails the Yangtze River in China

SELLING TIPS

Time to explore

"Choose a cruise plus a pre- or post-cruise tour to maximise time in the region. The experience is completely different from any in Europe, the Caribbean or other traditional cruise destinations," says Regent Seven Seas Cruises senior vice-president and MD, EMEA, Graham Sadler

Perfect fit

"Ask questions and narrow down the choices on offer to ensure that a guest is matched to the right ship, destination and at the right time of year to travel," advises P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow.

Keep it local

"We recommend agents focus on what makes an itinerary different. River cruises in Southeast Asia offer the chance to escape from the cities and experience the local culture," says APT's Jessica Shelton-Agar.



Visits to monasteries provide a glimpse into a rare culture

Yangtze. APT UK head of sales Jessica Shelton-Agar says: "Southeast Asia is one of the most incredible places in the world. A river cruise down the Mekong takes you through two amazing countries – Vietnam and Cambodia.

"The highlights along this stretch of this river include the chance to be moved by history with visits to locations such as the Killing Fields in Phnom Penh and on the other hand to be delighted with the many unique types of food and different experiences on offer," Shelton-Agar says.

The diversity of sights and activities makes Southeast Asia an ideal multigenerational cruise destination, too.

"In terms of age profile, the demographics do tend to be younger than some other cruises, due to the variety of activities that can be enjoyed in the region, such as snorkelling and other water sports, but cruising in Southeast Asia is also a comfortable and safe way for older guests to travel in the region," adds Star Clippers' Fay McCormack. ⚓

ITINERARIES

● APT: Cambodia and Vietnam

19-day Vietnam and Cambodia Highlights cruise leaves Ho Chi Minh City 17 December 2020, calling at Danang, Hoi An, Hue, Hanoi, Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Phnom Penh, Tan Chau and My Cho. From £4,995pp. aptouring.com

● P&O Cruises: Long haul

57-night Auckland to Southampton cruise leaves Auckland 15 February 2021, calling at Tauranga, Sydney, Bitung, Puerto Princesa, Manila, Hong Kong, Chan May, Phu My, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Colombo, Dubai, Muscat, Aquaba, Suez Canal, Valletta and Cadiz. From £6,499pp. pocruises.com

● Princess: Malaysia and more

11-day Southeast Asia round-trip cruise leaves Singapore 2 February 2020, calling at Kota Kinabalu, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, Sihanoukville, Bangkok and Koh Samui. From £670pp. princess.com

● Viking: Angkor Wat to Hong Kong

15-day Southeast Asia and Hong Kong cruise leaves Bangkok 30 September 2020 calling at Sihanoukville, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, Ha Long Bay and Hong Kong. From £5,290pp. vikingcruises.co.uk

● Oceania: Komodo dragons

20-day Southeast and Sunny Coast cruise leaves Singapore 11 November 2020, calling at Semarang, Surabaya, Bali, Komodo, Darwin, Thursday Island, Cairns, Whitsunday Island, Mooloolaba, Brisbane and Sydney. From £4,217pp. oceaniacruises.com

● Azamara: Asian spring

15-night Springtime in Asia cruise leaves Singapore 27 March 2021, calling at Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, Hong Kong, Taipei, Kagoshima, Kobe and Tokyo. From £3,575pp. azamara.com

● Silversea: Singapore to India

11-night Singapore to Colombo cruise leaves Singapore 29 February 2020 calling at Phuket and Yangon and Singapore. From £3,960pp. silversea.com

● Regent: Bali to China

15-day Radiance of Thailand cruise leaves Bali 22 February 2021, calling at Singapore, Koh Samui, Bangkok, Sihanoukville, Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang and Hong Kong. From £9,529pp. rssc.com

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22 November 2019



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Industry insider

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



Europa 2, reinvigorated

On a stormy night, Hapag-Lloyd's sleek mid-size ship *Europa 2* had to dock at Tilbury instead of Greenwich after the Thames Barrier was shut for safety reasons. The guests and staff on board took it all in their stride and on-board journalists including Vicky Mayer, editor of our sister publication, *World of Cruising*, were treated to a tour around the ship two weeks after she left dry dock after a refresh. Sophisticated and modern, the ship boasts three new bars, including a cool cigar lounge (above).



The new Cunarder

CTN's Gary Peters joined Cunard as it celebrated the steel cutting for its new ship at a ceremony in Naples. The ship – set to enter service in 2022 – will take “inspiration from our past” while integrating “exciting new concepts and ideas”, said the line's president, Simon Palethorpe (near right).

An all-American affair

Swanky French restaurant Plateau in Canary Wharf was the venue for a lovely lunch organised by American Queen Steamboat Company (AQSC). CTN editor Colette Doyle chatted to AQSC CEO John Waggoner and Light Blue Travel MD Rupert Thomson (left to right) about developments at the line, including the opening of sales for the 2020 season of fourth ship, the paddlewheeler *American Countess*.



Back to the '80s

Over 3,000 guests boarded Royal Caribbean's *Explorer of the Seas* for a three-night '80s extravaganza in October. Tony Hadley, Sister Sledge, UB40 and The Fizz played live while DJs Gary Davies and Pat Sharpe entertained at Club Tropicana disco. Daytime diversions included Bonkers Bingo with Bobby Davro and a live session from Bootleg Blondie.



Pushing the boundaries

Press gathered for breakfast at The Buckingham at Aster in London to learn more about Silversea's plans to expand its expedition programme. Guests heard from its director of expeditions, Conrad Combrink (pictured above with RRM's digital content editor Olivia Sharpe), who discussed the line's mission to push the boundaries in expedition cruising in 2020 and beyond. This includes a 167-day 2021 expedition world cruise.



Selling Seabourn's Caribbean!



During winter *Seabourn Odyssey* sails to less visited Caribbean islands, roundtrip from Barbados - ideal for the luxury 'warm weather' traveller.

Sell Seabourn as an ultra-luxury, all-inclusive boutique hotel at sea to your clients. The benefits – spacious all-suite accommodation, attentive service, a choice of stunning Caribbean destinations – and they only unpack once!



Here are a few more tips!

- Seabourn's 7* & 14-night holidays roundtrip from Barbados are easy to combine with direct flights from UK airports
- Intimate Seabourn Odyssey offers 229 ocean-front suites, 90% with private balcony
- 'With the Compliments of Seabourn' are:-
 - Our unique Caviar in the Surf® beach party, where crew members wade waist-deep through turquoise waters to serve guests chilled caviar and champagne^
 - Shopping with the Chef® experiences for fresh seafood at local markets, with an expert Seabourn chef
 - Marina Day® with complimentary watersports deployed from the ship's own marina^

SAMPLE ITINERARY

7-night Caribbean

21 Nov, 12 Dec 2020 | 16 Jan; 20 Feb 2021

Bridgetown (Barbados); Rodney Bay (St Lucia); Falmouth (English Harbour, Antigua); Great Harbour (Jost Van Dyke)^; Carambola Beach (St Kitts & Nevis)^; Fort-de-France (Martinique); St George's (Grenada); Barbados

Cruise from 3,299pp

^In select ports subject to weather conditions.

*7-night roundtrip Barbados cruises in Winter 2020/21



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